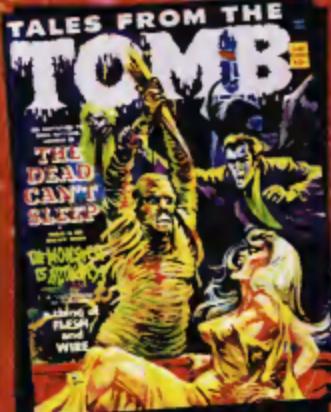


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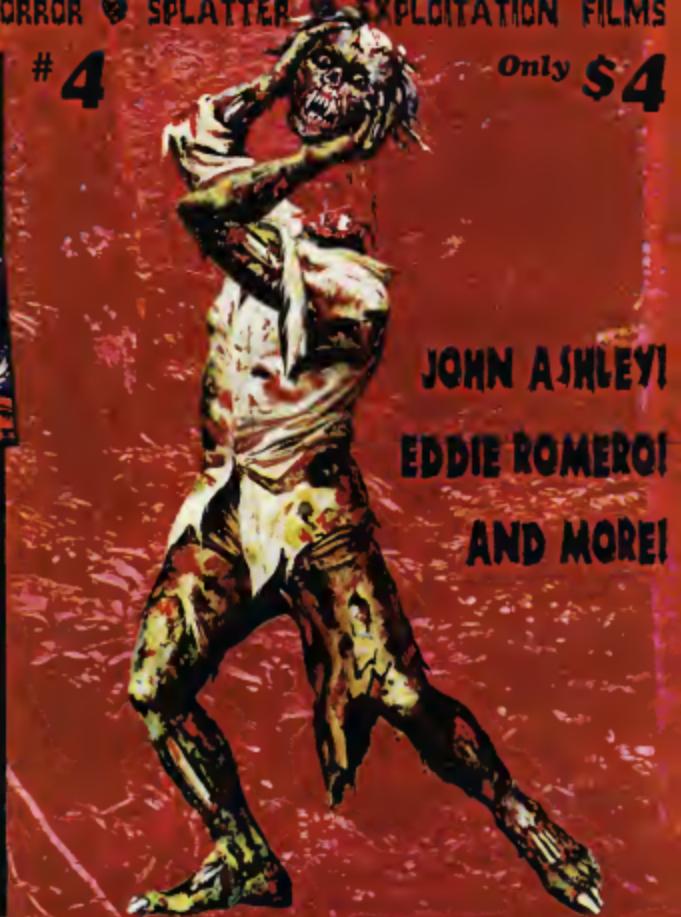


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UP FROM THE DEPTHS

by Scott Aaron Stine

Hey, has anyone noticed yet that this issue is completely bereft of paid advertisements? I have to be forthright and say I didn't do it for you, dear reader (Sorry to burst your bubble.) Unfortunately, ad space is—in most cases—solely responsible for keeping any magazine afloat. As a reader, it would be quite selfish—and unrealistic—to insist a magazine not sell ads just so one needn't have to wallow through them. (Shelling out five bucks for thirty-plus pages of ads is nice and all, really, but if I had a say, lord knows I could do with fewer "Enlarge Yer Penis NOW!" come-ons and "1-900-EAT FUCK" ads.)

No, the reason you don't see any advertisements in this issue is because I staunchly refuse to solicit them from here on out. (At least as far as my current paying advertisers are concerned. I'd have less problems with the penis enlargement and phone sex ads. Anyone who goes for the latter knows exactly what they're getting into, and anyone who falls for the former should exchange what brain cells they have remaining for something *useful*.) Granted, the ads I sell every issue pays for only a fraction of the printing costs, so it isn't a whole lotta' epidermis off my proboscis. The reasons for doing so are, A: Generally, all of my sponsors are entrepreneurs who sell tapes "from one collector to another," and, as it follows, B: I'm sick and tired of pandering to dirty bootleggers.

I have to fess up and say that I am ashamed for having solicited such cretins. A few issues back, co-publisher Michael von Sacher-Masoch wrote an editorial on the subject, which I allowed only after he made the distinction between "good" bootleggers and "bad" bootleggers. In retrospect, I've finally admitted to myself that this point is altogether moot. (To further protect myself from the slings and arrows of some pissed-off advertisers, I added a disclaimer after his piece so I wouldn't have to write to these mooks and explain "no, you're a *good* bootlegger, not a *bad* bootlegger." *As if* there's a difference.) But enough hiding behind the shield of capitalism. To err is human; to kowtow to people who have probably never worked an honest day in their life and offer barely watchable dopes for two to three hours wage is another thing entirely.

For the last two decades, I have met and have had dealings with more bootleggers than I can (or care to) recount. Many of them are amiable people, and got into the business because of their love for such films. Just as many, though, recognize it for what it is: An easy way to make money without having to extol too much effort. With very little manual labor involved, and even less financial backing, one can easily obtain films (mostly foreign prints or out of print US tapes), make copies, repackage it (if one is truly inspired to go to such *excruciating* lengths), and sell it for fifteen to twenty bucks. Hell, even I did a short stint of making tapes available "from one collector to another" in the mid-80s; I didn't make any money at it, but I had a blast making my own video covers for films no longer available, and it gave me an excuse to, well, buy more videos.

Again, I am far from perfect, but I *do* consider myself a morally sound person, and no matter how you justify it, selling copies of another person's film without legally obtaining the rights to it is ethically questionable. Yes, bootleggers often sell films that are no longer available from any legitimate sources, here and abroad, and without them, such films would never see the light of day. True, but look at even the most "respectable" dealer, and you'll notice that films of this ilk make up less than five percent of their catalog. And just because a film is available on PAL and *not* NTSC does not mean it is up for grabs by any yahoo with two VCRs and a buttload of blanks. It is only technically "legal" because there is no way for anyone to properly enforce it.

My dealings with bootleggers have never been good, but I've continued to purchase their third-generation wares purely out of desperation. My first truly abysmal experience was with H.A. "Alan" Hale of All Horror Video *aka* Import Horror Video, who ran off with three hundred bucks of mine (I'm sure you noticed me showing my gratitude to this ratscumcancerfuck in the "Fuck You" section of this magazine since its conception, so I'll refrain from verbally braining him any

See *Up From the Depths*
Continued on page 44

Scott's VIDEO VAULT

by Scott Aaron Stine (with additional commentary by Michael von Sacher-Masoch)

Most film reviews are accompanied by extensive credits (when they're readily available, anyway) and are outlined accordingly:

Original Title [Translation, if necessary] (Year of production)

Production Company or Distributor [Country of origin]

DIR = Director/s, PRO = Producer/s, SCR = Screenwriter/s,
DOP = Director/s of Photography, EXP = Executive Producer/s,
MFX = Make-Up Effects, SFX = Special Effects, VFX = Visual Effects,
MUS = Music Composer/s, and STR = Cast (All actors are alphabetized by last name. In case of a single name—an honor usually reserved by either stunt animals or strippers—it is alphabetized thus.)

AKA = Alternate title/s [Translation, if necessary] (In case of alternate versions of the film where additional footage is added, original years of production are given here as well)

Approximate running time; Color and/or Black & White

NOV = Availability of film novelization and author [Publisher]

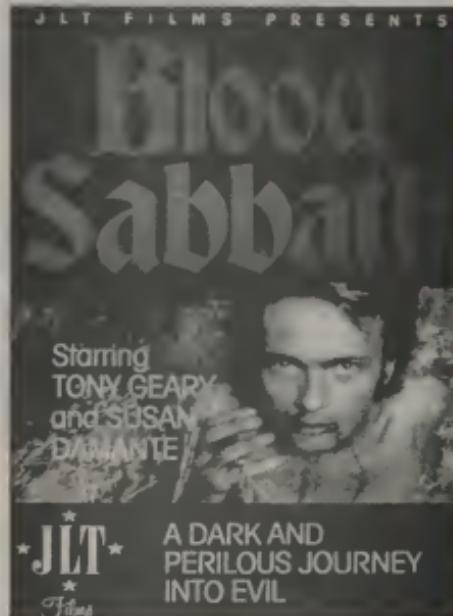
SND = Availability of soundtrack [Record Label]

VID = Availability on videocassette and title of release [Video Label and format of tape if not NTSC], listed running time of print, language of print and subtitles, widescreen letterboxing (LBX); and—if applicable—any “double-bill” or “triple-bill” features the video release may include as well] (When a running time for a particular videocassette is erroneously cited on the box or label, the actual running time of the print it contains is noted in parenthesis immediately following the listed time. I have also done the same with “compressed” running times of non-NTSC formats. As a rule, I round the running time to the nearest minute. If this isn’t close enough for you, get a subscription to Video Watchdog.)

Some of the titles may also be accompanied by less technical information, such as ADL = Adline/blubs used in advertisements, or—for those with weak constitutions and/or a sense of effus—“I’ve also issued various “Warnings” as to whether a film contains scenes of animal cruelty and/or slaughterhouse footage, and autopsy footage and/or actual surgery footage. (The former two are delineated with a “~~Warning~~”, and the latter two by a “~~Warning~~”.)

And, not to forget the hardcore splatterpunk, I have issued certain films a “hard gore” rating, delineated by a “~~Warning~~” at the end of the review. These are included solely for those indiscriminate individuals who are only looking for the goriest fare, and don’t want to muss around with milder stuff. As far as carnage is concerned, these are the *crème de la crème*. (It doesn’t necessarily mean these films are any good, mind you; they’re just a little nastier than what most people are accustomed to seeing in modern day horror films.)

Oh, and if you can’t figure out what “XXX” stands for, it’s a safe assumption that you really do need to get out more often. Nothing personal, I assure you.



✿ Blood Sabbath (1972)

Barbet Film productions, Inc. [USA]

DIR: Brianne Murphy

PRO: William A. Bairne and Lisa Fluet

SCR: William A. Bairn

DOP: Michael Margulies

MUS: Bax

STR: Susan Damante, Felice Darvey, Tony Geary, Sam Gilman, Steve Gravers, Lynn Harris, Samra Harvey, Kathie Hilton, Terri Johnson, Susan Landis, Mary Lind, El Prieto Ortega, Francesca Pella, Jane Swiskay, Dyanne Thorne, Ramona Timberlake, and Jane Tsentsis

Approximately 86m, Color

VID: Blood Sabbath [JLT Films, Inc.; 81(86)m]

ADL: *A Dark and Perilous Journey Into Evil*



Blood Sabbath continued...

David, a Vietnam vet-cum-drifter (Geary, years before he hit it big as Luke in TV's *General Hospital*) is accosted by a gaggle of stinky, nekkid hippies, and is knocked unconscious. He dreams about a low-rent version of the *Lady in the Lake*, and is taken in shortly thereafter by a hermit named Lonzo. He soon finds out that not only was the girl real (a water nymph, apparently), but that Lonzo works for the red queen, Alotta (Dyanne Thorne, who—as every *Ilsa* fan knows—has “alotta” cleavage), a witch who runs a coven in the mountains. The only way David can make it with his dream girl is to sell his soul; Alotta is happy to oblige, but only because she has ulterior motives.

Even as far as bad flicks go, this one is a little tough to sit through in one stretch. The dialogue is as stale as yesterday's toast, which occasionally gives way to fits of overacting where the actors have to scream in order to be emotive. The continuity is abysmal. Gore is relegated to one very unconvincing decap. The drama is summed up by some third-rate Nam flashbacks and the most dreary “happy, happy, joy, joy” love scenes ever filmed. And the nudity... let's just say there's more

stinky, nekkid hippies than one would ever want to see in their lifetime. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the actresses in this film spend more time disrobed than most porn starlets do in any single film. (Ironically, the bosomy antagonist doesn't show off her tit jobs until an hour into the film. And, yes, Thorne does make a better prison camp warden than she does a hippie paganite.) And—worst of all—all of the stinky, nekkid hippies spend half their screen time “dancing”. (And speaking of stinky, nekkid hippies who can't dance, one of the coven girls is none other than Jane Tsentis aka Jane Sentas, the stinky, nekkid hippie star of *Sacrilege*, reviewed in issue number three. Yes, she dances in that film as well. Oh, the horrors we endure...)

I would assume that Geary probably had a hand in this film going into moratorium so soon after its first and only video release. (Shoot, this sucker's probably a skeleton in Thorne's closet as well, and she never had a career that could be threatened by such skeletons.)

Recommended only for fans of stinky, nekkid hippie films. And maybe those poor souls who have the hots for Tony Geary.

✿ Blood Tide (1977)

Athon Productions [Greece]

and Connaught International [UK]

DIR: Richard Jeffries
 PRO: Donald Langdon and Nico Mastorakis
 SCR: Richard Jeffries and Nico Mastorakis
 DOP: Ari Stavrou
 EXP: John D. Schofield
 SFX: Yannis Samiotis
 MFX: Vince Jeffords
 MUS: Jerry Moseley
 STR: Lydia Cornell, José Ferrer, James Earl Jones, Lila Kedrova, Martin Kove, Spyros Papafrantzis, Rania Photiou, Annabel Schofield, Sofia Seirli, Deborah Shelton, Despina, Tomazina, Irini Tripkou, and Mary Louise Weller
 AKA: The Red Tide
 Approximately 82m; Color
 VID: Blood Tide [Continental Video; 82m]
 ADL: *It feeds on human flesh!*

A tenacious young man follows his missing sister to a secretive Greek isle, and finds not only his bugfucked sibling, but Fry (Jones), a Shakespeare-spouting, machete-wielding “archeologist” who inadvertently unleashes a primeval critter from its watery imprisonment. (“He played Othello once in college, and never quite got over it.”) Unfortunate for everyone involved, the already cautious islanders may be forced to revive certain traditions which involve virgins and

blood sacrifices. (Can't have one without the other, now can we?)

This small scale monster flick is exceptional for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the presence of Jose Ferrer (as the Mayor of the small island community) and James Earl Jones, a powerful actor who brings a certain amount of depth to even the most tawdry productions in which he appears. (Not to imply *Blood Tide* is cheap genre fodder; low-rent, maybe, but exceptional considering the budget.) Also of note is the film's unrelenting atmosphere; despite the formula, the film-makers keep the proceedings tense, instilling an essential sense of dread that is sorely missing from most horror films in this day and age. (Remember when monster flicks used to be scary?)

Although the gore is not gratuitous, the few scenes that punctuate this film are far from tame. The only real letdown—in reference to special effects or otherwise—is the monster itself; fortunately, we are spared the sight of its rubbery hide for all but a few frames.

Since the title on the US print of *Blood Tide* was video-burned, I think it is safe to assume that it was originally released under another title, but I have yet to find reference to the elusive moniker anywhere.

If monster flicks are your thing, check it out.

Michael says...

Blood Tide is a moody, low-key horror film that is heavy on the drama and characterization, and as such is quite bland and even boring. (Despite a great performance from James Earl Jones.) The gore is as good as one can do with rubber body parts, and the cheesy monster doesn't look too bad, if only because we see it for a few seconds at a time. (The "monster goes boom" ending is well done, and—thank Satan—it isn't shown from every possible angle.)

The film's most inspired moment involves a religious painting that shows good triumphing over evil, which is peeled back to reveal two other paintings, the final one showing evil triumphing over good. (Not much different than what I feel Christians have been doing to the history books for years.)

Though not a great film, I would have to recommend it if only because you could do worse. (With all of the films Scott has forced me to sit through, I know you could do worse.)

Enigma Rosso (Red Enigma) (1978)

Daimo Cinematografica [Italy]

C.I.P.I. Cinematografica [Spain]

CCC Filmkunst [West Germany]

DIR: Alberto Negrin



PRO: Leonardo Pescarolo
 SCR: Peter Berling, Marcello Coccia, Massimo Dallamano, Franco Ferrini, Alberto Negrin, and Stefano Ubezio
 DOP: Edoardo Noe
 MUS: Riz Ortolani
 STR: Silvia Aguilar, Bruno Alessandro, Fausta Avelli, Ivan Desny, Nicoletta Elmi, Christine Kaufmann, Caroline Ohrner, Jack Taylor, Fabio Testi, and Aida Urruzola
 AKA: Trauma
 Approximately 85m; Color
 VID: Trauma [Wizard Video; 90(85)m]

The body of a sixteen-year-old girl is found wrapped in plastic and dumped in the river. (Doctor says she bled to death after "her lower abdomen [was] torn open by an instrument that was anything but sharp.") Inspector de Salvo is assigned to crack the case before it gets too much media attention. His search leads him to an "exclusive" boarding school, whereupon he finds the girl's close-knit friends (a group everyone refers to as "the inseparables") involved in some kinky goings-on. (One of them is making it with a teacher, another has gotten herself knocked up by God-knows-

Enigma Rosso continued...

who, and all three have more pocket money than they know what to do with. Hmmm..) More pressure is put on his investigation when someone by the name of "Nemesys" makes several attempts on the girls' lives.

Despite the abundance of sleaze, this seedy giallo thriller is actually a very engaging mystery as well. (Some may consider the extensive teen nudity—very naughty bits, indeed—a bonus.) The melding of a classic mystery formula with such unpleasant subjects as back-alley abortions, teenage prostitution, and death by dildo (don't tell me you didn't already figure out the latter) is not altogether uncommon in Euro-trash, but rarely is it this excessive whilst seemingly uncontrived.

The production values are above average, although the camerawork does tend to get a bit wobbly, and Ortolan's score is—shall we say—less than subdued. Performances are commendable, with outstanding work from such recognizable figures as Jack Taylor (playing a store owner with "young" tastes) and Nicoletta Elmi, that cute little girl from *Il Mostro è il Tavola...* *Barone Frankenstein* (1974) (*aka* Andy Warhol's *Frankenstein*) and *Profondo Rosso* [Deep Red] (1975).

An exemplary whodunnit from the Big Boot.

Michael says...

This whodunnit thriller was entirely predictable... probably due to the fact that I've seen it before. (I hadn't realized this until Scott made me watch it again so I could review it for this issue.) If, however, you haven't seen it, my guess is that you may be surprised.

First, this film stars Nicoletta Elmi, my favorite Italian child actress. I say she's my favorite because she's in damn near every Italian whodunnit that requires a child actress, so she's the only one I ever recognize.

Second, is the ample amount of full frontal nudity. Not just any nudity, it's mostly teen nudity. There's even an extended shower sequence where we get to see two teens sharing the same shower stall. Those of you familiar with my reviews know by now that I'm not partial to shower scenes in horror flicks, but this is teen nudity, so that's an entirely different story. (I think it's time a certain contributing writer jump in the shower, sans any teens or hot water. The Editor.)

*Even though it's an extremely good Italian thriller, the gore is very mild unlike most films of the genre where the amount of violence is usually equal to the amount of sleaze. (Speaking of sleaze, *Enigma Rosso* has a fairly effective abortion sequence, and a mildly humorous dildo-thrust-at-the-camera rape scene.)*

If only we Americans could make films this classy.

Frankenstein Island (1981)

Chriswar Productions [USA]

DIR: Jerry Warren
PRO: Jerry Warren
SCR: Jaques Lacouture
DOP: Murray de Ately
MUS: Erich Bromberg
STR: Richard Banks, Tam Bodkin, Steve Brodie, John Carradine, Robert Christopher, Robert Clarke, Marla Conner, Andrew Duggan, Donna Green, Laurel Johnson, Melvin, Cameron Mitchell, George Mitchell, Dana Norbeck, Patrick O'Neil, Victor Schneider, Kathrin Viotior, and James Webb

Approximately 97m; Color

VID: *Frankenstein Island*
[Monterey Home Video; 97m]

While trying to break a long distance ballooning record, four men crash into the ocean and wash ashore a small island populated by leopard skin bikini-clad female natives with late 70s haircuts who couldn't dance if their life depended on it. Things seem all ducky until they find out the isle is also home to a mad scientist's just-as-ambitious wife and her zombified sailor henchmen. Furthermore, the spirit of Dr Frankenstein himself (an aging and obviously desperate John Carradine) pops up on occasion to remind his "Disciple of the Golden Thread" of "The power! The power! The power!" (Let's just say his lines are a bit scant.) And then things get, well, a little *bugfucked* from here on out, if you get my drift.

Jerry Warren, director of such cheesefests as *Teenage Zombies* (1957), *Invasion of the Animal People* (1962), and *The Wild World of Batwoman aka She Was a Hippy Vampire* (1966), comes out of retirement to prove that he can make films just as execrable as he did in his prime. (Upon my first viewing of *Frankenstein Island* upon its initial video release, I was completely ignorant as to its actual production date and assumed it to be a sixties production... although even then I had reservations and wondered if it were made even earlier.)

Frankenstein Island is so contrived as to make Al Adamson's most memorable films seem half-baked in comparison. The convoluted storyline includes not only embarrassing re-interpretations of Mary Shelley's characters, but also telepathy, zombies, aliens, Cameron Mitchell as a brine-swilling sailor who recites Poe, a skull bong, impotent white boy kung-fu, a toy pitchfork that turns the natives into vampires with cheap plastic Halloween teeth, and some of the most frugal special effects just this side of Ted V. Mikels. The only problem with this is that—discounting the film's "awe-inspiring" finale—this is one of the most tedious films imaginable.

Yes, one has to like their cinema *really* bad to derive any real appreciation for this sucker; if so, you shan't be disappointed if you actually manage to make it to the end credits unscathed.

Michael says...

I didn't think it possible that someone in the eighties could make a movie that looked, felt, and even smelled like one from the sixties. (Or why they would even want to.) The script problems are too numerous to mention, and the special effects bad as well. (There are some awful blue screen effects that mostly consist of Carradine yelling something about "The Power! The Power!" which apparently the native girls inherited, but never use. They do, however, know some dance moves. If you thought the dancers in Blood Orgy of the She-Devils and Orgy of the Dead were bad, you should get a load of these girls.)

The only reason I recommend this turkey is the film's last fifteen minutes, which are golden. Here we are accosted by martial arts far worse than Rudy Ray Moore's, a man wielding a laser gun and another a plastic Halloween pitchfork that turns people into vampires, a Frankenstein monster run amok, exploding cardboard machinery, and a catfight among the native girls. Better yet, all of the action is done in the style of the live-action Batman TV show from the 1960s, sadly without the onscreen "WHAM!" "ZAP!" and "POW!"

If all of this doesn't make you want to see Frankenstein Island, I don't know what will.

Frozen Scream (1975)

Ciara Productions [USA]

DIR: Frank Roach
 PRO: Renee Harmon
 SCR: Doug Ferrin, Celeste Hammond, and Michael Soney
 DOP: Roberto Quazada
 MFX: William A. Luce
 MUS: H. Kingsley Thurber III
 STR: Terri Argula, Sunny Bartholomew, Cheryl Crandall, Jennifer Flamen, Stephen Fusci, Sandie Gelbard, Thomas Gowen, Chris Hammond, Cheryl Harmon, Renee Harmon, Lee James, Lynne Kocol, Wayne Liebman, William A. Luce, Julie Ann Meisels, Ben Moase, Wolf Muser, Andy Nachtigall, Bill Oliver, Gary Pearl, Art Piatt, Bob Rochelle, Chris Russell, and Paul Yamanian
 Approximately 70m; Color
 VID: *Frozen Scream* [Continental Video; 75(70)m; Double-billed w/*Executioner II*]

"Two misdirected scientists think they've discovered a technique for immortality lowering body temperatures to slow down the ageing (sic) process. But the technique has one fatal flaw--a mind and soul altering side effect that turns the victims into frozen zombies! When Ann discovers her husband's poisoned body, she goes into shock and is hospitalized. The doctors try to convince her that Tom died of a heart attack, but her nightmarish visions lead her to believe otherwise. Her curiosity takes her to the doctor's secret laboratory where she discovers a freezer full of frozen zombies--including her husband, Tom!"

Despite the convoluted scientific explanations (the chill factor "inhibits aging" but subjects often display "signs of erratic and emotional responses") and minimal gore (most adhering to an "injury-to-the-eye" motif), this film would have been interesting had someone not left the entire cast in the aforementioned freezer a wee bit too long. (A detective says at one point "A pretty bad acting job, I'd say." Yeah, he must've seen the dailies.) The few enjoyably bad elements (Our resident mad doctor performs an operation with an Exacto knife What, no scalpel handy?) are far and few between, thus offering little payback to even the more desperate trash fiends.

So what's the bottom line? A buncha' idiots in black cowls, unintelligible Swedish accents, intrusive narration, awful post-synch dubbing, a wacky synth score, and the largest cast of unemotive, somnambulistic husks ever to shamble through a no-budget production.

A freezer-burnt shocker from the otherwise eventful 70s.

Michael says...

It's movies like this that pull one's suspension of disbelief so taut as to make its "scientific" point moot in its application. That aside, the movie still sucks. Apparently, in its theatrical test run, the audience--consisting of such lesser animals as rabbits, cows, fish, inebriated monkeys and video bootleggers--were unable to grasp the film's finer points, so producers decided to tack on narration that spells everything out for the viewer. The only problem with the dumbed-down narration is that it is placed over the actual dialogue, ruining whatever character development there may have been. (Of course, I doubt anyone would really mind as the acting is so stiff that the movie should probably have been called Wooden Scream instead.)

Also, the director apparently decided that he didn't want anyone mistaking this film for exploitation, so he went out of his way not to show any nudity whatsoever. Unfortunately, this forces the viewer to judge the movie solely on its other attributes: Plot,



Frozen Scream continued...

script, acting and special effects. Obviously, he didn't put much importance on the first three. The after-the-fact gore is not bad, though, if you like seeing people covered in generous applications of fake blood.

I was lucky enough to have recently purchased a copy of this movie for \$9.00. Yup, lucky me.

✿ Mardi-Gras Massacre (1978)

Production company unknown [USA]

DIR: Jack Weis
 PRO: Jack Weis
 SCR: Jack Weis
 DOP: Don Piel, Jack McGowan, and Jack Weis
 SFX: Mike Nahay
 MUS: Westbound Records
 STR: Gwen Arment, Butch Benit, Curt Dawson, Nancy Dancer, Cathryn Lacey, Wayne Mack, William Metzo, Laura Misch, and Ronald Tanet
 Approximately 92m: Color
 VID: Mardi Gras Massacre [VCII Home Video: 92m]

Some suit is roaming New Orleans sacrificing "evil" women (prostitutes, of course) to a Peruvian god, possibly Quetzalcoatl. (Shades of Larry Cohen's *Q—The Winged Serpent*, sans a big flying snake. Darn.) While investigating the case, a homicide detective gets involved with an uppity pro, who (of course) is inevitably targeted by the killer.

The story is fairly inconsequential, as it's the film's awkward, no-budget approach that makes the material interesting. Wooden performances compliment the equally knotty script. (If our antagonist didn't stop for so many dramatic pauses, *Mardi-Gras Massacre* probably would have clocked in at about half the ninety minute running time.) Another actor has to constantly consult the script on the desk before him, usually half way into his lines. Oh, and let's not forget the rhyming pimp. One can't forget the rhyming pimp.

There's also lots of skin, some poorly choreographed fight scenes, and a coroner's meat wagon which is actually nothing more than a weathered suburban. And disco music. One can't forget the disco music.

Oh, yeah. *Mardi-Gras Massacre* is a gorefest in the best H.G. Lewis tradition. There are multitudes of loving close-ups of evisceration. Forget the fact that, apparently, none of the women were born with ribcages, or that the same gore footage is recycled constantly throughout the film. But, hey, the red paint is piled on pretty damn thick. One can't forget the red paint.

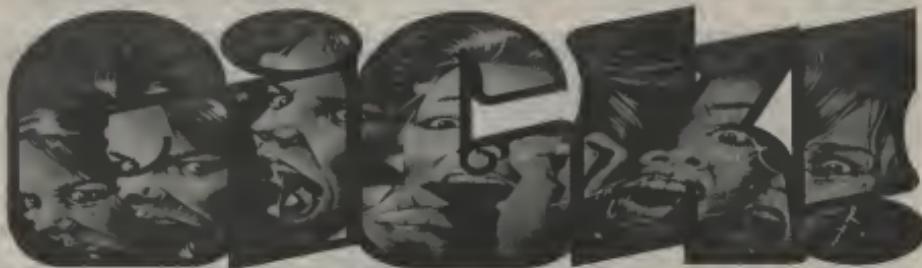
A somewhat charming diversion for most trash fiends. (Blood Feast by way of Saturday Night Fever? You come up with a better equation, why doncha'.)

Michael says...

(Michael fully intended to review this film—having suffered through it in my presence shortly before this issue went into production—but the glazed look on his face told me that anything even remotely resembling a review was probably not forthcoming. When I asked what the problem was, all he could say was "Evil. This film is... Evil. You are... Evil." Maybe he is too young to be watching these kinds of films. Next, he'll start emulating antagonists like the bad guy in *Mardi Gras Massacre*, reading me lines off a piece of paper during conversation, making short work of rubber body parts and the like. It's bad enough he wants me to make a sequel to *Enigma Rosso*. Maybe life does imitate art. The Editor.)

See Scott's Video Vault
 Continued on page 41

A HIGHBROW PERSPECTIVE ON LOWBROW ENTERTAINMENT



THE JOURNAL OF HORROR • SPLATTER • EXPLOITATION FILMS

Hey There!
My Name Is
John Ashley
and I Will Be
Your Tour
Guide This
Evening...



A VISITOR'S GUIDE
TO BLOOD ISLAND

CHLOROPHYLL MONSTERS! NEKKID NATIVES! VAMPIRE CAVERNS!

HORRORS OF BLOOD ISLAND

Exploitation Cinema from the Philippines

by Scott Aaron Stine

It is difficult to imagine that a country barely larger than that of Wisconsin and Michigan combined would have its own movie industry. It is even more surprising in that it is comprised of 7,000 small islands, whose rugged terrain is generally made up of jutting mountains—many of which are volcanic peaks—and thick tropical jungles. If they are aware of Filipino cinema, many people have probably only been exposed to the films made there in the late 1960s and early 1970s that were produced by American filmmakers looking to exploit the economical benefits of filming on these islands. Although—like many smaller Asian countries—their films are more often than not primitive when compared to Western standards, they are no less a legitimate form of cinema.

What may surprise many people—even trash fiends—is that the Philippines have a cinema that was well established long before the 1960s, and that horror films were actually part of their cinematic tradition before this decade as well. Forgoing the Western staples of the horror genre, the Philippines drew on their own mythology of beasties and bogies with which to scare an audience. Horror fans may have heard of the vampiric *aswang*—which has also been featured in a couple of non-Filipino productions—but are probably wholly unfamiliar with such similarly-inclined bloodthirsty harbingers as the *manananggal*, the *boroka*, the *danag*, the *tiyanak*, et al.

Few of these films—if any—have ever made it to these shores, thus creating an erroneous sense that *Terror Is a Man* (1959) was the first horror film made in the islands. (This film—directed by Gerardo de Leon and Eddie Romero—was the first horror film made with an import market in mind.) Having since formed Hemisphere Pictures, they followed it up a few years later by two more genre efforts. The first, *The Blood Drinkers* (1966), all but disregarded eastern lore and instead focused on the Westernized staples of vampire cinema. That same year, this pair of filmmakers returned to Blood Island with *Brides of Blood*, this time with American actors to up the ante. (This also marked John Ashley's involvement with Hemisphere Pictures; by the third film in this infamous trilogy, Romero and Ashley splintered off from Hemisphere and began making genre efforts for other production companies.)

SACRIFICED TO THE
NON-HUMAN
CREATURE!



FREE FREE



FREE
EXHIBITIONERS: Bring out to every
exhibition house who are interested before
the opening.

BRIDES
OF BLOOD

Starring John Ashley, Karl Taylor

in
blood-curdling
color

The public eager for more of the same (scantily clad natives + explicit gore + exotic locales = box office success), *Brides of Blood* was followed by *The Mad Doctor of Blood Island* (1968), which offered even more sex and violence than its predecessor. A third film—Romero's solo effort *Beast of Blood* (1970)—was churned out to capitalize on the series' notoriety, but spelled the end for the franchise.

That same year, de Leon made *Creatures of Evil*, which followed in the steps of his earlier vampire effort. Again, it was a highly stylized, atmospheric horror film that was a far cry from what his protégé Romero had been making up until this point. In the next few years, though, Romero would eventually prove himself to be a capable craftsman as well, even if he didn't have the artistic eye of de Leon.

During the early 1970s, Romero and Ashley's company Four Associates would be the most productive of the American-Filipino film houses, although they quickly found competition. The proverbial straw that broke the camel's back was Roger Corman and his New World Pictures; after visiting the set of *Beast of the Yellow Night*, Corman decided to set up shop in the Philippines, beginning with *The Big Doll House* which

was in the works. This effort by exploitation filmmaker extraordinaire Jack Hill was so successful that it was quickly followed the next year by another women-in-prison flick, *The Big Bird Cage*. This led to a string of similarly inclined WIP films, including Romero's *Black Mama, White Mama* and *The Woman Hunt* (both 1972).

Although such sexploitation films were the most successful imports at the time, the Philippines continued to produce horror films for the American market. Outside of Romero's genre efforts (usually starring John Ashley), most of these were particularly lackluster. Films such as *Daughters of Satan*, *The Night of the Cobra Woman*, *Superbeast*, and *The Thirsty Dead* offered little—if any—of the sleaze-ridden and gore-drenched delights their advertisements promised.

Much of the political unrest that had been plaguing the country for so many years (between democracy and communism, Christians and Muslims) came to a head in the mid-1970s, putting an end to American-based movie companies producing their films in the Philippines. With the islands being swamped by American filmmakers exploiting the land's resources and offering little in return (made more apparent by Corman's intrusion), most of these foreign businessmen—Ashley included—found themselves facing more resistance from the locals than they could deal with.

By the late 1970s, few films made in the Philippines (almost exclusively by Filipino filmmakers) found any kind of a market outside of their shores. (The only "notable" exception is the films of Cirio H. Santiago, who for over twenty years churned out exploitation films that obviously held some appeal to Filipinos and Americans alike.)

With the advent of mass market videocassettes, and the constantly growing demand for ethnic video stores in the United States, some of the Filipino horror films made since have made it to these shores. Notably different from the films that are usually touted as being "Filipino", these efforts bear much more resemblance to the films produced in other Asian countries, primarily Indonesia and—to a lesser extent—Hong Kong.

For a while thereafter, Western staples took a back seat to local lore and superstition, although—due to the growing popularity of Hollywood-style films in the Philippines—this started to shift in the last decade. Sadly, aswangs and other mythical creatures now have to compete with more mundane supernatural goings-on and—considering the limited demand of horror films in the Philippines—the current trends will eventually overtake the more traditional conventions.



EDDIE ROMERO

Mad Director of *Blood Island*

by Scott Aaron Stine

It is safe to say that most Americans have never heard of filmmaker Eddie Romero, and the few people who have had his name pass their lips are probably obscure film aficionados. In his native Philippines, though, he is a highly regarded director who has dabbled with every genre, and who has worked with budgets both generous and almost non-existent. It is films of the latter variety for which he is best remembered in the states and abroad, as it is his shoe-string horror fare—in particular the infamous “Blood Island” films—that have garnered something of a cult following.

For many, his name is almost inseparable from John Ashley, the American actor with whom he had a lasting business relationship that spanned several decades. Together, they co-produced films made entirely in the Philippines, but geared for an American market desperate for exploitative theater fodder.

Little is known about the man save for what scant information can be found in film pressbooks, and one wonders how accurate these are. From one of these capsule biographies, we are told that he comes from one of the Philippines’ most distinguished families, and that his father was the Philippine Ambassador to the Court of St. James. As a young man during World War II, Eddie supposedly ran an underground newspaper that—rumor has it—garnered a price on his head by the Japanese.

Wanting to further his career as a writer, he became involved in the motion pictures industry, and soon excelled in his field, winning the FAMAS award, the Filipino equivalent of our academy award.

In Pete Tombs’ book *Mondo Macabro*, we are told that Romero did begin writing—and having his work published—at an incredibly early age. His work (appearing in such publications as *Philippine Free Press* and *Panorama*) came to the attention of filmmaker Gerardo de Leon in 1941, who—recognizing his talent—began collaborating with him despite his age.

His directorial debut at the age of twenty-two was *Ang Kamay ng Diyos* (1947). Despite problems due to his inexperience—and the fact he didn’t speak the language in which the film was made—this trying experience did not deter him from wanting to further his career as a filmmaker.

In 1958, he began producing English-speaking pictures for the international market, having seen the lucrative potential in making films that appealed outside of his native land. A year later, he joined forces with Kane W. Lynn for Lynn-Romero Productions, and had a modicum of success with the enterprise. Four years later in 1963, Hemisphere Pictures was formed, with Eddie Romero as Vice President in Charge of Production. This spelled a major change in the focus of the films in which he was involved.

Early in his career, Romero primarily directed war pictures, which were quite popular in the Philippines, and proved to be a fairly valuable import as well. Before Hemisphere, he only co-directed (with de Leon) one horror film, *Terror Is a Man* (1959), which was a low-budget take on the classic H.G. Wells’ novel *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. His next genre effort, *Brides of Blood* (1966) would be for Hemisphere Pictures, and also marked his first foray with a young American actor by the name of John Ashley. This partnership of sorts would last until Ashley left the Philippines in the mid-1970s.

Brides of Blood (co-directed with Gerardo de Leon) was the first in the notorious “Blood Island” trilogy, which continued with *The Mad Doctor of Blood Island* in 1968 (also co-directed with de Leon), and culminated with *Beast of Blood* in 1970. (*Blood Island* was apparently a popular location, as it was featured in numerous films prior to these, although most of those were war films and not mad doctor flicks.)

In the early 1970s, horror continued to make up much of Romero’s output, although by this time he began trying his hand at other venues of exploitation cinema. (His most notable from this time is the Corman-backed *The Big Doll House* (1971), which debuted an aspiring actress by the name of Pam Grier. (She would take parts in several more Romero-made exploitationers before heading back to the states and become a leading lady in several influential blaxploitation films.)

With Ashley’s departure back to the states, Romero’s penchant for churning out drive-in theater fare waned considerably, and eventually he began helming more serious projects that garnered him some acclaim as an exceptional filmmaker. (Eddie Romero is cited as an associate producer—alongside John Ashley—in Francis Ford Coppola’s Vietnam epic *Apocalypse Now* (1979), giving him some credibility he couldn’t accrue with his earlier films.)

Unfortunately, little information is available on Eddie Romero following him and Ashley going their separate ways. (It is also probably safe to assume that the accompanying filmography is incomplete following these years, as very few of these later productions made

it to these shores.) Since his involvement in genre films ended with this break-up, it is doubtful that his later output would interest horror fans much anyway.

Regardless, the handful of films he did contribute to the genre will be long remembered by the aforementioned obscure film aficionados as the peak of his career, despite the fact that many of these films are laughable and—considering the hack and slash approach to filmmaking—seemingly inept. Whatever their faults, they embody a brand of innovative filmmaking that could only be conceived under the rigors of extremely limited means.

One may be able to slight these films as being anything but art, but no one can take away the fact that—for some of us—they're a hell of a lot of fun.

FILMOGRAPHY

Eddie Romero (aka Edgar F. Romero)
Born 1924 (Negros Oriental, Philippines)

- ☒ *Apocalypse Now* (1979) PRO
- ☒ *Beast of Blood* (1970) DIR/PRO/SCR
 - aka *Beast of the Dead*
 - aka *Bestia de Sangre* [*Beast of Blood*]
 - aka *Blood Devils*
 - aka *Horrors of Blood Island*
 - aka *Return to the Horrors of Blood Island*
- ☒ *Beast of the Yellow Night* (1971) DIR/PRO/SCR
 - aka *Beast*
- ☒ *Beyond Atlantis* (1973) DIR/PRO
 - aka *Sea Creatures*
- ☒ *The Big Doll House* (1971) PRO
 - aka *Bamboo Dolls House*
 - aka *Woman's Penitentiary*
 - aka *Women in Cages*
 - aka *Women's Penitentiary*
 - aka *Women's Penitentiary III*
- ☒ *Black Mama, White Mama* (1972) DIR/PRO
 - aka *Women in Chains* (1972)
- ☒ *Brides of Blood* (1966) DIR/PRO
 - aka *Brides of Blood Island*
 - aka *Brides of Death*
 - aka *Brides of the Beast*
 - aka *Grave Desires*
 - aka *Island of the Living Horror*
 - aka *Las Novias del Monstruo*
 - [*The Brides of the Monster*]
 - aka *Orgy of Blood*
 - aka *Terror on Blood Island*
- ☒ *A Case of Honor* (1968) DIR
- ☒ *Calvary Command* (1963) DIR/SCR
 - aka *The Day of the Trumpet*

- ☒ *Cry of Battle* (1963) PRO
 - aka *To Be a Man*
- ☒ *Desire* (1963) DIR
- ☒ *Flight to Fury* (1966) PRO
- ☒ *Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon* (1976) DIR
- ☒ *Intramuros* (1964) DIR/PRO/SCR
 - aka *The Walls of Hell*
- ☒ *Ang Kamay ng Diyos*
 - [*The Hand of God*] (1947) DIR/SCR
- ☒ *Lost Battalion* (1961) DIR/PRO/SCR
- ☒ *The Mad Doctor of Blood Island* (1968) DIR/PRO
 - aka *Blood Doctor*
 - aka *El Doctor Loco de la Isla Sangrienta*
 - [*The Mad Doctor of Blood Island*]
 - aka *Tomb of the Living Dead*
- ☒ *Man on the Run* (1963) DIR
 - aka *The Kidnappers*
- ☒ *Manila Open City* (1986) DIR/SCR
- ☒ *Moro, Witch Doctor* (1964) DIR/PRO/SCR
- ☒ *The Passionate Strangers* (1965) DIR
- ☒ *The Raiders of the Leyte Gulf* (1963) DIR/PRO
- ☒ *The Ravagers* (1965) DIR/PRO/SCR
- ☒ *Savage Sisters* (1974) DIR/PRO
 - aka *Ebony, Ivory and Jade*
- ☒ *The Scavengers* (1963) PRO/SCR
- ☒ *Sudden Death* (1975) DIR
- ☒ *Terror is a Man* (1959) PRO
 - aka *Blood Creature*
 - aka *Creature from Blood Island*
 - aka *The Gory Creatures*
- ☒ *Twilight People* (1972) DIR/PRO/SCR
 - aka *Atacan los Monstruos*
 - [*Attack of the Monsters*]
 - aka *Beasts*
 - aka *Island of the Twilight People*
- ☒ *Whiteforce* (1988) DIR
- ☒ *Woman Hunt* (1972) DIR/PRO
 - aka *Escape*
 - aka *The Highest Bidder*



FANTASTIC – SHOCKING

BEAST OF BLOOD

STARRING JOHN HANLEY
CELESTE THORNELL

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JOHN ASHLEY

FROM TEENAGE JUVIES TO MONSTER MOVIES

by Scott Aaron Stine

Depending on what generation in which you were born determines how (and if) you remember this late actor. Had you been a teen in the late 1950s, John Ashley's name was synonymous with juvie films and the beach pictures from American International Pictures that starred the likes of Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello. (You may even re-member him from his short stint as a rockabilly artist for Dot Records, if music was more to your liking than film.) If you were a horror fan who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, you are probably more familiar with his contributions to many a low-budget import from the Philippines. If you were an avid watcher of television in the 1980s, you probably would have stumbled across his name as both an actor and—primarily—a producer for numerous action-oriented TV shows. Although not a household name, John Ashley has accrued something of a cult personality, if only because he had a modicum of success in so many aspects of show business.

Born on December 25th, 1934 in Kansas City, Missouri, he was adopted by a doctor and his wife and raised in Oklahoma as John Atchley. From all accounts, he was a fairly good student, did well in sports (especially wrestling) and majored in business. At the age of twenty-one, he moved to California to further his business studies at UCLA. It was there, while working as a studio guide for tourists, he approached John Wayne on the set of *The Conqueror* (1956) to ask for an autograph. The two hit it off, and Wayne—apparently sensing Atchley's innate interest in acting—helped him to secure an agent. Thus was born the more user-friendly name of John Ashley.

Due to his youthful good looks and an ability to be comfortable in front of the camera, he was given a part in a TV series called *Men of Annapolis*, produced by the king of the theatrical gimmick, William Castle. Soon thereafter, he was cast in his first theatrical film, an AIP juvenile delinquent flick called *Dragstrip Girl* (1957). Immediately thereafter, he was offered the role as the "heavy" in a string of similarly exploitative juvie flicks. Along the way, someone saw the young man's potential and eventually cast him as the hero.

During this time, he also had some minor success as a rockabilly singer/guitarist, releasing several singles on Dot Records' subsidiary, Silver Records. (Because of his musical ties, he would end up palling

around with such talents as Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent.) He used this to his advantage and was given the opportunity to strut his stuff in several of these early films. (As an interesting side note, Ashley's combo that appeared in *Hot Rod Gang* included a young up-and-comer by the name of Glen Campbell.)

Unfortunately, the popularity of juvie films gave way to the more upbeat freneticism of beach-oriented teen musicals. Even more unfortunate was that producers didn't see Ashley as leading man material, and cast him as second fiddle to the likes of Frankie Avalon in many of these romps. Ashley was forced to branch out, even trying his hand at more serious fare (in films such as *Hud*), but he was not content with playing supporting roles.

In 1966, he got his shot at playing a leading man, although it probably wasn't quite what he was hoping for. Taking a jaunt to the Philippines, he was cast as the heroic lead in *Brides of Blood*, a film co-directed by veteran filmmakers Gerardo de Leon and Eddie Romero for their Filipino-based Hemisphere Pictures. (This was not Ashley's first film for the horror genre; he starred in the schlock-fests *Frankenstein's Daughter* and *How To Make a Monster* eight years before. The latter was a sequel of sorts to *I Was A Teenage Werewolf*, for which—coincidentally—he was edged out of the lead by tenderfoot Michael Landon.)

By all reports, Ashley was stricken by the Philippines' charms, and decided to pursue his career overseas. *Brides of Blood* precipitated a trilogy of successful "Blood Island" films from Hemisphere; these pictures proved successful, allowing him and director Eddie Romero to produce a number of unrelated projects for other companies. Functioning as both actor and producer, Ashley made a string of exploitation films during the early 1970s that made him a drive-in name once again.

By the mid-1970s, American co-productions being made in the Philippines came to an abrupt halt. Rumors have it that Ashley's life was threatened by locals who were tired of Americans exploiting their country's resources (possibly fueled by Roger Corman having practically moved AIP into the Philippines).

Ashley moved back to the states, and—having practically given up acting—started focusing on his talents as a producer. Before long, he was helming a number of successful television series (*The A-Team* being one of the more notable shows), and continued to do so until his death almost twenty years later from a heart attack. (Shortly before his death, he had befriended exploitation filmmaker Fred Olen Ray, and had even rescinded his previous refusal to act again by starring in his film *Invisible Mom*.)

Little is publicly known about his personal life throughout all of this. Despite (or maybe *because* of) the attention he elicited from the opposite sex, he was only married once (to fellow AIP regular Deborah Walley), and this only lasted four years, from 1962 to 1966. (Save for a role in the obscure shocker *The Severed Arm* from 1974, Walley's career as an actress would hold little or no interest to most trash fiends.) In May of 1963 they had a son, Anthony Ashley, who later became involved in film as well (even working alongside his father in several of his later television efforts).

Although many may slight his standing as an actor, it would be because of the genres of films to which he contributed, and not necessarily his talents. In spite of the low-budgets and lackluster production values, Ashley was always the professional, and approached each film with a serious attitude no matter how silly the premise or how abysmal the script. In this way, he stood out in the films he participated in (much in the way John Carradine did), bringing a certain amount of class to even the most tepid productions.

FILMOGRAPHY

John Ashley (*ne* John Atchley)

Born December 25, 1934 (Kansas City, Missouri)

Died October 3, 1997 (New York, New York)

- ☒ The A-Team (1983-TV) PRO/EXP/STR
- ☒ Apocalypse Now (1979) PRO
- ☒ Beach Blanket Bingo (1965) STR
- ☒ Beach Party (1963) STR
- ☒ Beast of Blood (1970) STR
 - aka Beast of the Dead
 - aka Bestia de Sangre [Beast of Blood]
 - aka Blood Devils
 - aka Horrors of Blood Island
 - aka Return to the Horrors of Blood Island
- ☒ Beast of the Yellow Night (1971) PRO/STR
 - aka Beast
- ☒ Beyond Atlantis (1973) PRO/STR
 - aka Sea Creatures
- ☒ The Big Doll House (1971) PRO
 - aka Bamboo Dolls House
 - aka Woman's Penitentiary
 - aka Women in Cages
 - aka Women's Penitentiary
 - aka Women's Penitentiary III
- ☒ Bikini Beach (1964) STR
- ☒ Black Mama, White Mama (1972) PRO
 - aka Women in Chains (1972)
- ☒ Brides of Blood (1966) STR
 - aka Brides of Blood Island

- aka Brides of Death
- aka Brides of the Beast
- aka Grave Desires
- aka The Island of Living Horror
- aka Las Novias del Monstruo
- [The Brides of the Monster]
- aka Orgy of Blood
- aka Terror on Blood Island
- ☒ Coach of the Year (1980-TV) PRO
- ☒ Dragstrip Girl (1957) STR
- ☒ The Eye Creatures (1965-TV) STR
 - aka Attack of the Eye Creatures
- ☒ Frankenstein's Daughter (1958) STR
 - aka She Monster of the Night
- ☒ Gladiator School (1988-TV) EXP
- ☒ Hardball (1989-TV) EXP
- ☒ Hell on Wheels (1967) STR
- ☒ High School Caesar (1960) STR
- ☒ Hot Rod Gang (1958) STR
- ☒ How to Make a Monster (1958) STR
- ☒ How to Stuff a Wild Bikini (1965) STR
- ☒ Hud (1963) STR
- ☒ I Accuse (1990-TV) EXP
- ☒ Invisible Mom (1995) STR
- ☒ Journey to the Center of the Earth (1993-TV) PRO
- ☒ Manila Open City (1986) STR
- ☒ The Mad Doctor of Blood Island (1968) STR
 - aka Blood Doctor
 - aka El Doctor Loco de la Isla Sangrienta
 - [The Mad Doctor of Blood Island]
 - aka Tomb of the Living Dead
- ☒ Marker (1995-TV) PRO
- ☒ Men of Annapolis (1957-TV) STR
- ☒ Motorcycle Gang (1957) STR
- ☒ Muscle Beach Party (1964) STR
- ☒ The Quest (1962-TV) PRO
- ☒ Raven (1992-TV) EXP
- ☒ Savage Sisters (1974) PRO/STR
 - aka Ebony, Ivory and Jade
- ☒ Scar City (1998) EXP
 - aka Scarred City
- ☒ Sergeant Deadhead (1965) STR
 - aka Sergeant Deadhead, the Astronaut
- ☒ Smoke in the Wind (1971) STR
- ☒ Something Is Out There (1988-TV) EXP
- ☒ Straightaway (1961-TV) STR
- ☒ Sudden Death (1975) STR
- ☒ Suicide Battalion (1958) STR
- ☒ T-Bird Gang (1959) STR
- ☒ Twilight People (1972) PRO/STR
 - aka Atacón los Monstruos
 - [Attack of the Monsters]
 - aka Beasts
 - aka Island of the Twilight People

- ☒ 2001: A Space Odyssey (1969) STR
- ☒ Walker, Texas Ranger (1993-TV) PRO
- ☒ Werewolf (1987-TV) EXP
- ☒ Will: The Autobiography of G. Gordon Liddy (1982-TV) PRO/STR
- ☒ Woman Hunt (1972) PRO/STR
aka Escape
aka The Highest Bidder
- ☒ Young Dillinger (1965) STR
- ☒ Zero Hour (1957)

John Ashley has also made the following television appearances:

- The Beverly Hillbillies (1962) 5/22/63
- The Beverly Hillbillies (1962) 1/26/66
- The Beverly Hillbillies (1962) 10/25/67
- The Deputy (1959) 9/19/59
- Frontier Doctor (1958) 5/16/59
- Jefferson Drum (1958) 4/25/58
- Petticoat Junction (1963) 9/24/63
- Wagon Train (1957) 4/20/60
- Wagon Train (1957) 1/2/63
- The Wild, Wild West (1965) 11/11/66



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CRIATURA BESTIAL, AL ACECHO DE LA PRESA HUMANA!



SCOTT'S
FILIPINO

VIDEO VAULT

by Scott Aaron Stine (sans additional commentary by Michael von Sacher - Masoch)

First, this is by no means a complete list of Filipino horror and exploitation films, so don't chastise me with a letter complaining "Hey... why didn't you review such-and-such film," or "How could you forget [insert migraine-inducing film here]?" These are the only films of this ilk that I managed to get my grubby little paws on before this issue went to press, and that's all she wrote. (Don't worry... Filipino films take precedence over everything else, so any I perchance across are sure to show up in these pages shortly thereafter. Lucky you.)

Second, Michael has decided to bow out of contributing follow-up reviews to my own in this section because, well, he simply hasn't the stomach for it. After I suggested an all Filipino horror issue a few months back, he let out a blood-curdling scream and made haste from our house shouting "Someone, call the police! He's trying to kill me!" so I thought it best to let him take a temporary leave of absence. Methinks I probably should wait until he's recovered to announce the "South of the Border Horrors" Mexican film special that's in the works, huh?

You should thank Michael, though, as he adamantly insisted that I not reprint reviews for Filipino films listed in past issues—unless they appeared in issues no longer available—as that would be selling the reader information for which they've already paid. Once, maybe even twice. (What's wrong with recycling material to pad out the proceedings? Make me write all *new* material, why doncha'. Sheesh.) So, for any reviews that have previously appeared in this rag, I simply listed the title and the issue in which it was reviewed instead of reprinting it in its entirety.

Aljas Batman en Robin (1991)

Regal Films, Inc. [Philippines]

DIR: Tony Y. Reyes

SCR: Joey de Leon and Tony Y. Reyes

DOP: Oscar Querijero

EXP: Lily Monteverde

SFX: Linda Torrente

MUS: Mon del Rosario

STR: Mon Alvir, Bert Cayanan, Jun de Guia, Joey de Leon, Keempie de Leon, Joaquin Fajardo, Ernie Forte, Nemy Gutierrez, Rene Hawkins, Yoyong Martinez, Cathy Mora, Vina Morales, Bomber Moran, Almira Muhlach, Panchito, Rene Requiestas, Enciong Reyes, Danny Rojo, Ruben Rustia, Rey Solo, Chinkee Tan, Rommel Valdez, Ariel Villasanta, and Dawn Zulueta

Approximately 103m; Color

VID: Alyas Batman en Robin

[Regal International, Inc; 103m; In Pilipino]

A crime spree is initiated by Joker and Penguin (with Catwoman joining in the fun not long thereafter), so it's up to two brothers who take up the personas of Batman and Robin to squelch their nefarious plans. But, hey... why does everyone stop in the middle of a bank robbery and join in on a song and dance number that swipes 1950s American pop music, their lyrics painfully "updated" and sung in pidgin-English? Why does Joker

sport a 'stache and two ponytails? Is this for real? And—the most important question of all—who really cares? It's brain-damaged films like this that make life a constant joy for trash fiends like myself, giving us reason to scour ethnic video stores in search of something that would have never been made in the good ol' US of A. (I think it's safe to assume that DC Comics didn't give the okay on this project.)

Here, Batman is even more out of shape (i.e. potbellied) than Adam West was in his prime, and Robin sports Regal Video's emblematic "R" on his chest. The lyrics to such classic rock'n'roll ditties as "Let's Go to the Hop" are oh-so-subtly changed to "Let's believe in love... let's be good, not bad... let's be afraid of God!" And let's not forget the epitome of Filipino slapstick, which has Batman slamming a bad guy against a telephone pole, only to have a coconut fall from the sky and bonk the poor crook on the head. And how did Penguin get his name? Easy. Jope N. Guin. (Joe Penguin. Get it? Jope N. Guin? Ohhh... kill me now.)

And let's not forget the all-star finale, which has the aforementioned heroes and villains getting down with Wonder Woman, Superman, Tarzan, Zorro, Robin Hood, and a dwarf Spider Man. Yes... a dwarf Spider Man. (Guess they only had a child's Spider Man costume at their disposal, and wanted to see fit that it didn't go to waste.)

—A truly mind-numbing experience.



Aswang (1992)

See *Painful Excursions* Volume One, Number Ten.

Beast of Blood (1970)

Hemisphere Pictures Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Eddie Romero
 PRO: Eddie Romero
 SCR: Eddie Romero
 DOP: Justo Paulino
 EXP: Kane W. Lynn
 SFX: Teofilo Hilario
 MUS: Tito Arévalo
 STR: John Ashley, Liza Belmonte, Angel Buenaventura, Alfonso Carvajal, Eddie Garcia, Johnny Long, Beverly Miller, Bruno Punzalan, and Celeste Yarnall
 AKA: Bestia de Sangre [Beast of Blood]
 Beast of the Dead
 Blood Devils
 Horrors of Blood Island
 Return to the Horrors of Blood Island

Approximately 90m; Color

ADL: *Stunning, squirming, SHOCKING terror as a human head transplant creates a new horror creature more fantastic than science—more frightening than fantasy!*

In this sequel to *The Mad Doctor of Blood Island* (1969), Bill Foster (John Ashley) returns to the infamous island and finds things have not settled down much since the supposed disposal of the dreaded Dr. Lorca. The natives have become restless following a series of mysterious abductions by "the evil one." It seems that not only has the mad doctor survived—albeit horribly disfigured—he has managed to keep alive not only the body of the "blood monster" responsible for his unsightly appearance, but its decapitated head as well. So, it's up to 60s cut-rate teen heartthrob Ashley to clean up the mess and save the poor ignorant natives from

being used as human guinea pigs. (Guess he got tired of lounging around with Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon, those wussies.)

For those who love low-rent splatter from the Philippines, this is the third in a trilogy of "Blood Island" films. Production values are several steps down from its predecessors (I smell a quickie!), the script is still fettered with a politically incorrect charm, and the gore—although much tamer than *Mad Doctor of Blood Island*—is still cheap and nasty. Unfortunately, the filmmakers called it quits with this particular franchise after *Beast of Blood*, and went on to do a couple of other somewhat inferior—but still loads of fun—trash horror flicks. (Okay, so *The Twilight People* (1972) might as well have been an entry in the "Blood Island" series, even though it was painfully bereft of gore.)

So now that I got me a *Mark of the Devil* barf bag, where can I snag one of those fake ten dollar bills with the *Beast of Blood* ad art printed on the backside? Anyone who sends me one gets a lifetime subscription to GICK! How's that for a bribe?

Beast of the Yellow Night (1970)

See *GICK!* Volume One, Number Two.

Beyond Atlantis (1973)

Dimension Pictures, Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Eddie Romero
 PRO: John Ashley and Eddie Romero
 SCR: Charles Johnson
 DOP: Michael J. Dugan and Justo Paulino
 EXP: Charles S. Swartz
 SFX: Teofilo Hilario
 MUS: Ed Norton
 STR: Gil Arceo, John Ashley, Andres Centenera, Leigh Christian, Vic Diaz, Eddie Garcia, Sid Haig, George Nader, Kim Ramos, Lenore Stevens, Angelo Ventura, Ken Warren, and Patrick Wayne
 AKA: Sea Creatures

Approximately 91m; Color

VID: Beyond Atlantis [United Home Video; 91m]

ADL: *Forgotten by nature... invaded by modern man. Half Human... Half Fish!*

Filipino favorite Vic Diaz is a sailor who pawns some rare pearls, and inadvertently leads a small group of men with questionable ethics—Haig and Ashley among them—to a remote island that is home to a race of ping pong ball-eyed, water-breathing natives who are not too happy about revealing their presence to outsiders. (Surprisingly, none of the uninvited guests seem too perturbed by their hosts' fishy countenances.) These

half-breeds are ruled over by a man whom we are led to believe is the Roman god Neptune and his half-nekkid daughter.

Although much more accomplished than Romero's "Blood Island" films, this PG film is not as engaging thanks to its all ages atmosphere. (Remnants of his exploitation roots show up from time to time, but these are scant indeed.)

John Ashley is commendable as a small-time, fast-talking gambler, even if he does seem out of his element. Sid Haig (who starred in many a Jack Hill film, *Spider Baby* (1964) and *Foxy Brown* (1974) among them) is wonderfully sleazy as usual. Vic Diaz gets to show a little more range than he usually does in these Filipino-American co-productions, but is still primarily wasted.

With cat-fighting, cockfighting, some mild gore, an early Moog score, lotsa' butt-ugly 70s fashions, people in bad make-up doing synchronized swimming, and "cannibal fish". (The latter are piranha. If they were truly "cannibal fish" they would eat each other and not anything else that came within reach, but the script-writers apparently overlooked this small fact.)

You know the score.

✿ The Big Bird Cage (1972)

New World Pictures, Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Jack Hill

PRO: Jane Schaffer

SCR: Jack Hill

DOP: Philip Saccadlan

EXP: Roger Corman

SFX: Sam Hilary

MUS: William A. Castleman and William Loose

Teda Bracci, Andres Centenera, Marissa

Delgado, Vic Diaz, Rizza Fabian, Anitra Ford, Wendy Green, Pam Grier, Sid Haig, Subas

Herrero, Karen McKeivie, Candice Roman, and Carol Speed

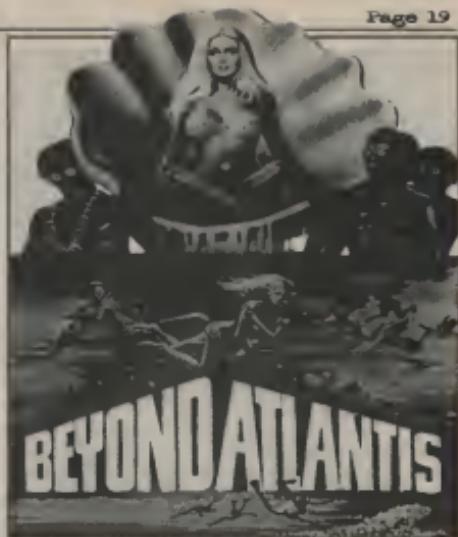
Approximately 96m; Color

VID: The Big Bird Cage

[New Horizons Home Video; 93(96)m]

ADL: WOMEN SO HOT WITH DESIRE THEY MELT
THE CHAINS THAT ENSLAVE THEM.

Blossom (Grier) and Django (Haig) are two lovers who rob a group of wealthy people in order to support the revolution, and end up taking Anitra Ford as hostage. Although they get away, she is taken into custody as an accomplice (she's not very well liked by the people for "screwin' half the government"), and winds up in a work camp for women. The place is ruled with an iron hand by a puppy-kicking warden (Andres Centenera, the blind guy from *Beast of the Yellow Night*) and his flagrantly homosexual guard (Vic Diaz).



As the half-nekkid women deal with the rigors of prison life, the aforementioned revolutionaries coincidentally plan on storming the selfsame camp in order to secure more women for their revolution.

Had I known this politically incorrect exploitationer would be so much fun, I wouldn't have waited this long to snag on a copy. Despite the fact this is one of Corman's "let's cut costs even more" Filipino ventures, *The Big Bird Cage* is vintage New World. Although this early WIP flick could've stuck to the formula and still have been successful, director/screenwriter Jack Hill actually manages to make it work on so many other levels. (Of course, it probably wouldn't have been so successful had it not been for the cast; Grier and Haig steal the show, proving that they had chops rarely demonstrated in such low-budget efforts.)

To accommodate the engrossing script and ingratiating performances is much of the niceties one would expect from a WIP film. T&A is in abundance (although Grier is much shyer here than she was in *Foxy Brown*), and the violence is sometimes unsettling even though it's not nearly as extreme as what one would find in any given Ilsa film.

Best moments are: Seeing Diaz leer at Haig, who looks like he just stepped out of a gay biker bar, and Diaz' watching the prisoners shower (with much disinterest) and stating "Never mind the crotch cooties... they have to eat, too." (Oh, and seeing Diaz being raped by the female guards offers some sick humor, as well. Homophobic, yes, but not altogether unfunny.)

Truly a classic.



BIG DOLL HOUSE

STARRING PAN GRIER

✿ The Big Doll House (1971)

New World Pictures, Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Jack Hill

PRO: Jane Schaffer

SCR: Don Spencer

DOP: Fred Conde

EXP: John Ashley and Eddie Romero

SFX: Teofilo C. Hilario

MUS: Hall Daniels

STR: Judy Brown, Roberta Collins, Siony Cordona, Jack Davis, Shirley de las Alas, Myrna de Vera, Jerry Franks, Pam Grier, Sid Haig, Kathryn Loder, Kathy McDaniel, Brooke Mills, Letty Mirasol, Christiane Schmidtmer, Gina Stuart, and Pat Woodell

AKA: Womens Penitentiary III

Approximately 95m; Color

VID: The Big Doll House

[New Horizons Home Video; 94(95)m]

Womens Penitentiary III

[MCM Home Entertainment; 90(95)m]

ADL: **THEY CAGED THEIR BODIES... BUT NOT THEIR DESIRES!**

A buncha' kooky prisoners in a Filipino women's penitentiary decide to make a break for it after conditions start deteriorating. (A masked inquisitor—their identity concealed until the film's finale—watches on as unruly prisoners are tortured by a sadistic guard in a makeshift dungeon, all without the warden's consent.) A sympathetic doctor tries to get to the heart of the problems, but finds opposition from both sides.

Although the storyline is pretty damn typical of the WIP genre, director Hill manages to inject enough characterization (and, well, sleaze) into the otherwise dry proceedings in order to keep things moving along briskly. Although not completely in their element, the high points are Grier and Haig, with the latter playing a sleazy delivery man, and the former a carpet-chewing drug dealer. The gratuitous sex and violence, though, is the film's true star, paving the way for so many like films, both from the Philippines and from abroad.

SEE a man raped at knifepoint by a desperate female prisoner. HEAR blaxploitation star Pam Grier sing the film's theme. LAUGH at the silly-looking torture contraptions littering the camp's makeshift dungeon. WALLOW in the sleaze that is the linchpin of this sordid epic.

Hill improved the formula with this film's inevitable follow-up, *The Big Bird Cage*, made the following year. (Hill was apparently asked to "tone down" his no-holds-barred approach for this sequel of sorts, which wasn't the detriment it would seem.)

✿ Black Mamba (1975)

Filmmakers Organization [Philippines/USA]

DIR: George Rowe

PRO: Alex O. David

SCR: Carl Kuntze

DOP: Justo Paulino

SFX: Ben Otico

MUS: Lamberto H. Avellana, Jr.

STR: Dick Adaire, John Ashley, Antonio Carrion, Alfonso Carvajal, Andres Centenera, Marlene Clark, Jimmy Fabregas, Eddie Garcia, Rosemarie Gil, Laurice Guillen, Subas Herrero, Stevie Maniquiz, Willie Nepomuceno, Pilar Pilapil, Vivian Velez, Angel Ventura, and Mary Walter

Approximately 92m; Color

VID: Black Mamba

[Incredibly Strange Filmworks; 92m]

A witch (Clark) puts the evil eye on numerous townsfolk after she is falsely accused of stealing a dead man's ring. A skeptical doctor, Paul Morgan (Ashley), tries to find a logical explanation for the weird goings-on, but eventually has to turn to magic and superstition in order to put an end to the witch's scourge.

This lame melodrama occasionally veers into horror film territory, but even this can't save a film bad even by Filipino-American co-production standards. Even its sore points—cheesy devils crowding the scenery, a priest with a huge pointed collar, a snake-up-the-crotch scene, and Ashley in the most unbecoming polyester suits imaginable—are't enough to interest those looking for "so bad it's good" fare. (And just to guarantee that the proceedings are hard to stomach, the filmmakers opted to include some animal cruelty and scenes of an actually corpse being eviscerated during an autopsy.)

If any film could change my decision to watch *every* Ashley film ever made, it would be this sucker long before Beach Blanket Bingo. (Having been lost for twenty five years, it's a shame Black Mamba couldn't remain buried for twenty five more.) ■■■■■

• The Blood Drinkers (1966)

Hemisphere Pictures [Philippines]

DIR: Gerardo de Leon
 PRO: Cirio H. Santiago
 SCR: Cesar Amigo
 DOP: Felipe J. Sacdalan
 EXP: Danilo H. Santiago
 SFX: The Hilario Brothers
 MUS: Tito Arevalo
 STR: Cesar Aguilar, Eriberto Amazan, Jr., Eddie Arce, Luis Benedicto, Andres Benitez, Jess Buenafior, Rudy Bugarin, Conchita Cruz, Ernesto David, Felipe Dionisio, Felix Dionisio, Eddie Fernandez, Amalia Fuentes, Frankie Lastimosa, Tiva Lava, Eva Montes, Renato Murado, Jr., Fred Param, Ric Paulino, Ronald Remy, Ricardo Rivera, Renato Robles, Celia Rodriguez, Jess Roma, Frank Saavedra, Felisa Salcedo, Paquito Salcedo, Evelyn Shreve, Vicki Velasquez, and Mary Walter
 AKA: The Vampire People
 Approximately 84m; Color and B&W

Dr. Marcos (Ronald Remy) is a tall, bald-headed vampire with a cape, sunglasses and a whip who performs blood transfusions in order to cure the love of his life, Katrina. He manages to revive her, but can't finish the operation without appropriating and transplanting the heart of her twin sister, Jenita, who's unaware of her vampiric sibling's existence.

This often-times confusing vampire flick makes several abysmal attempts to offer scientific explanations for vampirism, but ultimately falls back upon the standard dime-store representations that have cluttered the silver screen since the conception of cinema. The melodramaticism is laid on thick, the production values

are typical of low-rent 60s horror, and there's an annoying use of tinted photography. (For no rhyme or reason, the film stock changes from black and white, to tinted black and white, to color throughout; although the filmmakers try to instill some logic to this early on, such dramatic effect is sacrificed for reasons unknown soon thereafter.)

Effects are bottom-of-the-barrel. Two vampiric henchmen—a dwarf and a hunchback, natch—sport big funky (and obviously plastic) teeth. Stock grunting is used for the two, and is painfully looped; as if that wasn't cutting corners, the sound effects editor also used the sound of a jaguar or some other big cat in order to make a stuffed bat more menacing. (It didn't work.) And the soundtrack often veers into second-rate Outer Limits territory. At least the editor saw fit to have the blood-suckers "dissolve" instead of using herky-jerky stop-animation when they disappear.

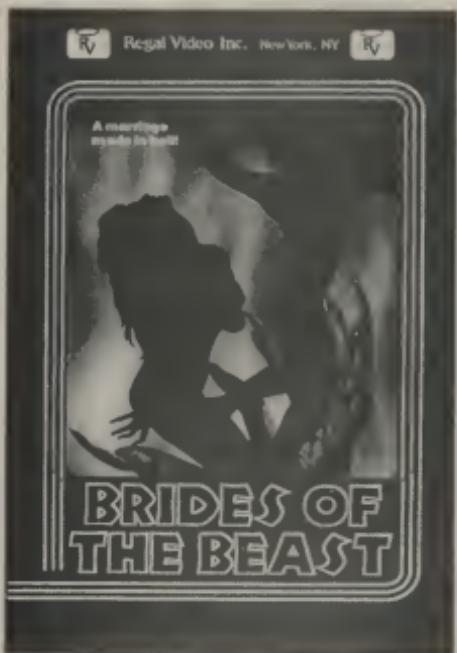
In all fairness, *The Blood Drinkers* does succeed in being fairly stylish when not scraping bottom, and is worthy of some historic note as it's one of the first Filipino horror flicks to be released stateside. (This probably has much to do with the fact that it was based on a comic book series that borrowed more from Western interpretations than its own Asiatic folklore.)

Dated and of limited interest, but not without its merit as a film that did reasonably well with very limited means.

• Brides of Blood (1966)

Hemisphere Pictures, Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Gerardo de Leon and Eddie Romero
 PRO: Eddie Romero
 EXP: Kane W. Lynn
 STR: Angelita Alba, John Ashley, Andres Centenera, Eva Darren, Carmelita Estrella, Beverly Hills, Oscar Keesee, Quiel Mendoza, Mario Montenegro, Pedro Navarro, Bruno Punzalan, Ely Ramos, Jr., Ben Sanchez, Kent Taylor, and Willie Tomada
 AKA: Brides of Blood Island
 Brides of Death
 Brides of the Beast
 Grave Desires
 The Island of Living Horror
 Las Novias del Monstruo
 [The Brides of the Monster]
 Orgy of Blood
 Terror on Blood Island
 Approximately 92m; Color
 VID: Brides of the Beast
 [New Horizons Home Video; 85(90)m]
 Brides of the Beast [Regal Video; 85(90)m]
 ADL: *A marriage made in hell!*



Brides of Blood continued...

This low-rent creature flick—part of a series of "Blood Island" films that include *The Mad Doctor of Blood Island* (1968) and *Beast of Blood* (1970)—stars the ever-suave, ever-chivalrous John Ashley. This first time out, the villain is a scientist who—after being exposed to radiation from nearby atomic bomb tests (Bikini Atoll, Natch.)—becomes a hulking dime-store beastie who—like all good Filipino monsters—likes to rape and kill young native girls. Lucky for him, the superstitious populace is more than happy to sacrifice their virgin daughters to keep his bloody appetite sated. And to make everyone's plight more unbearable, the island on which the mad doctor conducts his experiments is plagued by flesh-eating banana trees with a hankering for the natives. Oh, and there's a shape-changing killer moth. Also, did I mention the dwarf servants? Hmmm... I think that's everything now...

Although not nearly as ethnocentric as some of these films tend to be, the undercurrent of sexism is a little heavier in this one. Of course, being a disposable horror flick, one is inclined to take the proceedings with a grain of salt. (Granted, the metaphorical grain of salt is

in high demand when it comes to early sleaze horror, but that shouldn't keep one from enjoying the film on a purely superficial level. Aesthetics aside, of course.) There is some liberal bloodshed, although the filmmakers upped the gore quotient considerably for the next entry in this successful series.

Highly recommended for fans of Filipino horror and John Ashley. (Of which, sadly, I'm both. Is it time to take my medication yet?)

✿ Caged Fury (1977)

Production Company Unknown [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Cirio H. Santiago
 MPX: Nita Manahan
 SFX: Mariano Garcia
 STR: Gina Alajar, Deborah Allen, Julie Ann, Tricia Annel, Pristin Arvesen, Renje Arvesen, Bill Beaumont, Dee Beaumont, Sam Beaumont, Myra Booth, Belo Borja, Mike Cohen, Jenny Dorfeld, Salve Geronimo, Bobby Greenwood, Ray Gretchen, Ulla Jonsson, Jennifer Lane, Meg Lapp, Margaret Magick, Catherine March, Dave Martin, Leo Martinez, Ken Metcalf, Rakin Muellel, Nelly Nayo, Taaffe O'Connell, Elizabeth Oropeja, Ron Owen, Lina Pimentel, Lenna Radde, Edward Reid, Jr., Efren Reyes, Jr., Mary Karen Ryan, Bill Scott, Lee Scott, Julie Smith, Sherry Snell, SOS Daredevils, S.P. Victoria, Eddie Villamor, Valrie Welch, Bernadette Williams, and Ernie Zarate

Approximately 85m; Color

VID: Caged Fury

[World Premiere Home Video, Inc.; 90(85)m]

ADL: *ALONE THEY'RE DANGEROUS...*
TOGETHER THEY'RE DEADLY!

An American-bashing Canuck with a Farrah Fawcett 'do is tossed in a Filipino prison camp, only to find out that its female prisoners are being brainwashed into human time bombs sent out to take down political figures. One may ask: Will she and her friends (or the viewer, for that matter) manage to make it out alive and with cerebral cortex intact before the film's ninety minute running time elapses? The rest may ask: Has Santiago ever directed a film even remotely engaging? Well, this is as close as he gets to fulfilling such an act.

Caged Fury is an unexemplary and fairly forgettable entry in the Filipino WIP cycle; the fact it is mostly unoriginal can be seen by the fact that much is simply borrowed from its predecessors. (Scenes like the depiction of a woman tortured by being strung up by her hair were swiped from *The Big Bird Cage*, for example.) The only ways it truly differs from the others is that it boasts the most silicone ever put on display in an

early 1970s film, and a rather distasteful scene of mass rape that makes the atrocities in the other films look charming in comparison. Oh, and the fact that a young Jim Wynorski was the casting director on this film, a credit to his name even he probably would like to forget.

Every reference I've seen for this film claims it was made in 1984; it's obviously a 1970s production, and—since it swipes its "human time bomb" premise from *Telefon*, I'm guessing it was released on the heels of Charles Bronson's superior thriller.

Better than the other Santiago efforts I was forced to endure while preparing for this issue, but I find little consolation in this.

❖ Daughters of Satan (1972)

See *GICK! Volume One, Number Two*.

❖ The Deathhead Virgin (1972)

See *GICK! Volume One, Number Zero*.

❖ Demon of Paradise (1987)

Santa Fe Productions, Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Cirio H. Santiago

PRO: Cirio H. Santiago

SCR: Frederick Bailey

DOP: Ricardo Remias

MUS: Edward Achacoso

STR: Dave Anderson, Joe Mari Avellana, Frederick Bailey, Bill Baldwin, Laura Banks, Liza Baumann, Hero Bautista, Angel Buenaventura, Ramon d'Salva, Jerry Hart, Paul Holmes, Lesley Huntly, David Light, Warren McLean, Nick Nicholson, Ronnie Patterson, William Steis, Henry Strazalkowski, Harry Taylor, Kathryn Witt, and Joe Zuchero

Approximately 87m; Color

VID: Demon of Paradise

[Warner Home Video; 84(87)m]

ADL: *IT WAITS UNDERWATER...*

TO SKIN YOU ALIVE!

Poachers in Hawaii make the mistake of using dynamite, awakening an overweight, dog-faced Creature from the Black Lagoon-wannabe. Pissed off about being kicked out of bed so rudely, our titular monster decides to make life hell not only for the locals, but an American Herpetologist as well.

As much as I usually like monster flicks of this caliber, *Demon of Paradise* is particularly rote. Not only does it go through the motions, but one would swear that the filmmakers were trying their damndest to be as uninnovative as humanly possible. Even if the production values had risen above the predictably low standards, it would have been to no avail.

Gore is sparse, and—even worse—rather dry. ("Dry" is not a good thing to be when most of the blood is shed in or near water.) Granted, the creature does "blow up real good" in the end, but it's too little, far too late.

Silly tepid monster fare from the same hack that brought us the equally abysmal *Vampire Hookers*. No, even Filipino films don't have to be this bad.

❖ Devil Woman (1970)

Production co. unknown [Hong Kong/Philippines]

DIR: Felix Villar and Albert Yu

PRO: Jimmy L. Pascual

SCR: Jimmy L. Pascual

EXP: Tommy C. Pascual

SFX: Michael Fung

MUS: Chow Fu Liang

STR: Robert Chen, Romy Diaz, Joe Garcia, Johanna Garcia, Cherie Gil, Rosemarie Gil, Yuen Ching Kee, To Chow Kwan, Alex Tang Lee, Lito Legaspi, Peter Multan, Max Rojo, Yukio Someno, Yuen Yan Wei, and David Yau

Approximately 93m; Color

VID: Devil Woman

[Something Weird Video; 93m; LBX]

A couple gives birth to a "monster," but decide to keep their baby girl despite the fact she has snakes for hair. Years later, a plague of snake-related deaths befall the nearby village (they all happen after midnight, so it must be "the devil's work") and—throwing the blame at the girl—they burn down her parents' house, killing them both. The young woman survives, and later hires a band of thieves to help her exact revenge on the townsfolk. Things are in her favor until a doctor-cum-martial arts expert arrives in town, ready to kick booty.

This film is an odd mélange of Filipino horror and Hong Kong chop socky, and almost works despite the clashing cultural genres. *Devil Woman* would be engaging, regardless of the juxtaposition, had it not chosen to waste much of its time on some very unnecessary melodrama. (Instead of fleshing out the story, it only succeeds in bogging down what action remains.)

The production values in *Devil Woman* are typical of both of the genres that spawned it. (With a mixed cast to accommodate both "parents".) The acting is sub-par, and the action is marred by fits of nauseating camerawork. Most of the special effects are similarly low-rent, although the female antagonist is actually quite effective with her gold contact lenses and tresses of squirming snakes in place.

I've seen worse, and I've seen stranger, but this one deserves at least some mention in the annals of trash film history. * * *

• The Killing of Satan (1974)

Cinex Films, Inc. [Philippines]

DIR: Efren C. Piñon

PRO: Pio C. Lee

SCR: Jose Mari Avellana

DOP: Ricardo Herrera

EXP: Conrado Puzon

SFX: Jun Marvelia

MFX: Cecine Baun

VFX: EL-G Arts & Ads

MUS: Ernani Cuenco

STR: Cecille Castillo, Charlie Davao, Paquito Diaz, George Estregan, Elizabeth Oropesa, Ramon Revilla, and Eryln Umali

Approximately 93m; Color

VID: The Killing of Satan

[Paragon Video Productions; 95(93)m]

ADL: *WHAT POWER SHOULD A MAN POSSESS TO CHALLENGE THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS?*

A small village is besieged by a magician in red tights and a cape ("The Prince of Magic." Natch.) and his just as colorful henchman. The townspeople come to find themselves relying on Lando, an ex-con who was sent to prison for killing their antagonist's brother, to save them from this supernatural scourge. After the magician's henchmen kidnap Lando's daughter and beat the snot out of his wife, the reluctant hero journeys to the bad guy's island lair, and finds himself confronted by more than just a podunk Dr. Strange knock-off.

This one's a hoot and a half, people. Everyone in the film displays some magical prowess: The bad guys all shoot power rays from their fingertips (their adversaries prefer to use their elbows, it seems) or have really intense staring contests, and when that doesn't work, they simply slug it out. All of the hokum is outrageously conceived, added onto the film after the fact by someone with great patience and a box of colored markers. The mad magician is aided by "cobra men" and, of course, ol' Scratch himself. (Complete with horns, a pitchfork, and a tail. Natch.) There's even a rotting mummy with a ping pong ball eye (which subtly graces the back of the video box).

Even though one would swear that this film was intended for a very young audience, *The Killing of Satan* is not without its gratuitous sex and violence. T&A is the call of the day in the magician's lair; his harem of young (extremely young) abductees are kept in a large cage, doing little more than standing for the entirety of the film, displaying their wares to anyone who cares. The gore is sparse, but surprisingly intense. (There is one ripped face prosthetic that is passable, although the highlight is a man getting crushed by a possessed boulder. This scene is not only outrageously gory, but is

hilariously funny, and could easily be inserted into a *Monty Python* skit without anyone the wiser.)

And if it wasn't bad enough, the inept dubbing should garner a few extra laughs. Sample exchange: "Uncle Miguel is dead." "You mean Uncle Miguel is dead?" (Yes, I think that's *exactly* what he means, you stupid git.)

Trash fiends rejoice!

• Mad Doctor of Blood Island (1968)

Hemisphere Pictures, Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Gerardo de Leon and Eddie Romero

PRO: Eddie Romero

SCR: Reuben Canoy

DOP: Justo Paulino

EXP: Kane W. Lynn

MUS: Tito Arevalo

STR: Alicia Alonzo, John Ashley, Alfonso Carvajal, Tony Edmunds, Cenon Gonzalez, Johnny Long, Quiel Mendoza, Tita Muñoz, Edward Murphy, Nadja, Ricardo Nipolito, Angelique Pettyjohn, Bruno Punzalan, Ronald Remy, Felisa Salcedo, Paquito Salcedo, and Ronaldo Valdez

AKA: El Doctor Loco de la Isla Sangrienta
[The Mad Doctor of Blood Island]

Tomb of the Living Dead

Approximately 88m; Color

VID: Mad Doctor of Blood Island

[Magnum Entertainment; 110(88)m]

Tomb of the Living Dead

[JTC Video; 85m]

ADL: *No waiting. No appointment. No escape!*

Here it is. The film to make John Ashley a household name. (Hey... he's a name in *my* household, coercion or no coercion.) *Mad Doctor of Blood Island*, the second in the series of wonderfully abysmal horror films based around the mythical "Blood Island", opens with a butt nekkid native being chased through the jungle and eventually torn apart by a crusty monster. (Watch out for those man-eating plants!) Shortly thereafter, Ashley and Pettyjohn arrive on the island to investigate a report concerning crazed natives with green blood. Turns out, you see, that there's a bad case of "chlorophyll poisoning" making the rounds, possibly precipitated by Dr. Lorca and his more than likely unorthodox experiments. That's just a guess, though.

This has got to be one of the most amazing PG films ever released, as I seriously doubt that it could squeak by with an R in this day and age. Not only does the film contain a surprising amount of full-frontal nudity, *Mad Doctor of Blood Island* boasts what has got to be the nastiest gore in a 60s film outside of H.G. Lewis' patented atrocities. Hastily torn body parts are

strewn about the sets, and we—the viewer—are treated to one of the nastiest pre-Dawn of the Dead eviscerations ever staged for our entertainment. Of course, one has to suffer from eyestrain provoked by the most overused zoom lens this side of Jesse Franco's, so be prepared for a migraine. (I've since invested in Dramamine in case I get the urge to sit through it again.)

But wait, there's more. Besides the cool demeanor of Mr. Ashley, we are exposed to the, uh, ample charms of Ms. Pettyjohn, fresh from an appearance in TV's Star Trek, and ready to start a string of porn flicks using the pseudonym of "Heaven St. John". Oh, and let's not forget the dirty dancing natives. (And you thought *Swazze* invented it.)

As if this film didn't already have enough going for it, it sponsored an interesting gimmick upon its theatrical release. Theatergoers were given a small vial of "green blood" (probably water and food coloring) and urged to "join the Mad Doctor of Blood Island in taking the oath of green blood." Say, does anyone still have one of these?

What are you waiting for? Someone to tell you this is a *good* film? God forbid. ■■■■■

☛ *Madonna... Babaeng Ahas* (1991)

Regal Films, Inc. [Philippines]

DIR: Artemio O. Marquez

SCR: Artemio O. Marquez and Victoria Thiff

DOP: Vir Anao and Jimmy Baer

EXP: Lily Monteverde

MFX: Maurice Carvajal and Nita Manahan

MUS: Demet Velasquez

STR: Luis Benedicto, Dante Castro, Tirso Cruz III, Mario Escudero, Rosemarie Gil, Luis Gonzales, Jeff Hernandez, Subas Herrero, Eddie Infante, Odette Khan, Eric Quizon, Angie Rosa, Raul Salvador, Caridad Sanchez, Judy Anne Santos, Snoopy Serna, Lucita Soriano, Anthony Taylor, Jess Vargas, Harvey Vizcarra, and Johnny Wilson

Approximately 112m; Color

VID: *Madonna... Babaeng Ahas*

[Regal International, Inc.; 112m; In Pilipino]

A young woman finds herself the victim of rather unbecoming curse, and dies while giving birth in a cave. The newborn is taken in by a hunter and his wife, the latter of whom is not all peaches and cream. To make things worse, the young girl—having grown into a young woman—is molested by her shit-faced father one night, and puts an end to his groping by turning into a large rubber snake. She leaves home, and finds herself spending the night in a park where three guys try to get her drunk and try to take advantage of her. Needless to



say, they are quickly dispatched by the same unwieldy rubber snake prop. She then gets a job as an exotic dancer, and is accosted by yet another guy, and, well, I think you know the tune by now.

This tepid PG-level shocker mired in melodrama and sophomoric effects work is a tough one to sit through even for fans of bad cinema, if only because it's too slow and homogenized to be a "so bad it's good" offering. The producers obviously spent some money on the girl's vengeful alter ego, and the metamorphosis leading up to it, but it's impossible to be taken in by the overused bladder effects and oversized snake puppet with ineffectual rubber fangs.

Sad, really. And I don't mean that in a tear-jerker sorta' way.

☛ *Night of the Cobra Woman* (1972)

New World Pictures, Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Andrew Meyer

PRO: Kerry Magness and Harvey Marks

SCR: Andrew Meyer

DOP: Nonong Rasca

SEF: Feling Hilario

MUS: Restie Umali

STR: Joy Bang, Marlene Clark, Logan Clarke, Vic Diaz, Roger Garret, Rosemarie Gil, Slash Marks, Andrew Meyer, Jimmy Milanios, Bert Rivera, and Vic Silayan

Approximately 76m; Color

VID: *Night of the Cobra Woman*

[Embassy Home Entertainment; 85(76)m]

ADL: *When making love is no longer enough... She sucks the life from the bodies of men!*

During WWII, a nurse, Lena (Clark), is bitten by a cobra while scouting for herbs, and is immediately possessed by the snake's spirit. Many years later, the woman is tracked down by an American med student (Bang) doing field research on antivenin, and is inadvertently introduced to the student's bo (Garrett)

Night of the Cobra Woman continued...

He himself becomes bitten by a snake, but is rescued by our resident cobra woman, who has the hots for him. Save for a love triangle, things aren't too complicated until Lena's spirit snake Movini is killed; since it was his venom which was keeping her youthful, she finds herself reduced to "sucking the life from the bodies of men", as the adline so coyly implies.

Night of the Cobra Woman is a fairly tepid Filipino-American horror flick, but it does boast better production values than many of them. (Ashley's films included.) Diaz plays Lope, a WWII soldier who rapes a nurse and then inexplicably becomes a dimwitted hunchback servant with a drooping eye. (It's only a notch above Vampire Hookers because here he's not plagued by fart jokes.) Make-up effects aren't terribly great, although the scenes with Lena shedding her skin look pretty good, and overall are better than most Filipino fare. (Again, Ashley's films included.) The film also benefits from a particularly downbeat ending, with everyone suffering quite horribly (with the final "punch" offscreen, and thus more effective).

Coulda' been a lot worse. * * *

✿ Psycho Sex Killer (1992)

ATB-4 Films International [Philippines]

DIR: Dante Pangilinan
 PRO: Allan Gilbert and Anna Theresa
 SCR: Bonnie Paredes
 DOP: Amado de Guzman
 EXP: Erlinda T. Burayag and Leona S. Tolentino
 MUS: Boy Alcaide
 STR: Lorna Confiado, Marcial Confiado, Mon Confiado, Nelson de Leon, George Estregan, Jr., Violy Gaviola, Allan Gilbert, Cherry Grant, Tootsie Guevarra, Cristina Heaven, Barbara Lamping, Stella Mari, Sherwin Montebon, Digna Morena, Edmon Ramos, Rhey Roldan, Cristy Sacdalan, Robert Talby, Viring Villa, and Andrew William

Approximately 86m; Color

VID: Psycho Sex Killer
 [Viva Video, Inc.; 86m; In Pilipino]

From what I gather, a psychiatrist's patient is responsible for a slough of seemingly unrelated murders, as if anyone cares. The shrink falls in lust with the head of the investigation, making things a little stickier than what they expected.

It's sad to see that the influence of the American slasher phenomenon isn't relegated to English-speaking countries. Despite the language barriers, the film is still predictable, as it adheres to formulaic conventions

without missing a beat. But—contrary to what one would expect in light of all this—the gore is mild, with only an axe to the face and a few throat slashings to get one through the ninety minutes that seem like much more. There's also no nudity (a wet T-shirt contest is as close as it gets), so if you're looking for some Asiatic T&A, look elsewhere. The production values are pretty good as far as Filipino genre fare goes, but—all things considered—who in Sam Hill cares?

Truly tedious.

✿ Pusang Itim (1980s)

Racar Films International [Philippines]

DIR: Jun Raquiza
 PRO: Larry Carillo
 SCR: Louis Alba
 DOP: Teddy Tan
 EXP: Ben Crisologo
 MFX: Rudy de Chavez
 VFX: Aperture 32
 MUS: Demet Velasquez
 STR: Leo Angelo, Jay-Ar Bernabe, James Brewer, Dolly, Bung Erazzo, Jun-Jun Erazzo, Michael Erazzo, Jo Jo Fowler, Josie, Monica Moza, Eva Rica, Rutling, Sara Stacey, and Johnny Ysmael

Approximately 90m; Color

VID: Pusang Itim [RNJ Corporation; 90m]

"The film you are about to see was based on a true medical case. Any similarity to places, persons, and other medical cases are purely coincidental." If it weren't for this coy disclaimer, non-Pilipino speaking viewers would probably think they were wading through a sexploitive supernatural melodrama; better we know it's the sexploitive psychological melodrama that it is.

Essentially, a female photographer is losing her foothold on reality, subjected to hallucinations that either revolve around a camera-shy black cat, or could easily be mistaken for vivid sexual fantasies. (People around her get nekkid at the drop of a hat, although no one but her seems to notice these public displays. Hmmm...) Her adolescent sister doesn't notice anything's out of the ordinary if only because she's wrapped up in the throes of puberty, playing with herself in front of the mirror or going to town on a pillow. Her housekeeper is also too preoccupied with her own sex life to notice anything amiss.

Some of the shocking "dream" sequences involve a melting wax dummy that I think the filmmakers are trying to pass off as the real thing, an oversized putty tat on a miniature set, and a were-feline that's only a notch more menacing than the stars of the stage musical Cats. Gore is extremely mild, but the soft-

core sex and nudity would keep this from receiving anything less than an R rating in this country. (Truth be told, this sucker would probably be considered child porn on these shores as I seriously doubt the young sister—who has just as many explicit nude scenes as her co-stars—is more than sixteen.)

I don't know the exact year of production; I'm guessing eighties by the film stock and the then-current fashions, although if it were American I'd say 1970s, at best. (To make matters worse, the video-burned credits sequence—obviously tacked on long after the fact—looks to have been done on a cheap word processor.)

Like so many other Filipino efforts, *Pusang Ibit* also swipes Bernard Hermann's trademarked score from *Psycho* in an effort to boost the non-existent tension. (Stock music is one thing, but this is outright theft.)

Humdrum stuff. ■ ■ ■

Regal Shocker—The Movie (1991)

Regal Films, Inc. [Philippines]

DIR: Jose Javier Reyes
 SCR: Jose Javier Reyes and Raquel Villavicencio
 DOP: Ricardo Jacinto
 EXP: Lily Monteverde
 MUS: Nonong Buencamino
 STR: Ai-Ai Delas Alas, Manny Castañeda, Dexter Dorin, Joe Mari Gachitorena, Isabel Granada, Ruffa Gutierrez, Aljon Jimenez, Vangie Labalan, Gina Leviste, Dyron Lozano, Marlon Lozano, Emilio Lunar, Ruben Manahan, Pewee Quisano, Romeo Rivera, Ana Roces, Ruby Rodriguez, Ben Sagnit, Caridad Sanchez, Jeffrey Santos, Judy Ann Santos, Randy Soliven, Chinkee Tan, Arlene Tolibas, Lou Veloso, Carmina Villaroel, Gammy Viray, and Anjo Yllana

Approximately 115m; Color

VID: Regal Shocker—The Movie

[Regal International, Inc.; 115m; In Pilipino]

This awkward anthology consists of three vignettes, only two of which could even be considered horror (one, peripherally). The first involves two young star-crossed lovers and her dysfunctional family. After the boy is killed in a plane crash, his ghost returns in an effort to console his grieving love. The second is a slapstick comedy about three crooks who kidnap two rich sisters and their dates, only to be thwarted by two nuns. The third—the only one that is truly a horror story—involves the vengeful ghost of a young girl who was accidentally killed by her older brother.

Overall, the production values are quite good, and—save for the comedy—the performances seemingly up to par. (Like so many recent Filipino films, the actors will go from speaking Pilipino into fluent English and

back again without any seeming logic to the transitions, making it difficult to determine if anyone actually has any chops.)

The first segment is little more than a tragic drama that veers off momentarily into the realm of the supernatural. The second is strictly for fans of Filipino humor: The nuns boast gargantuan habits with which they brain the crooks (Sally Field has nothing on them), and—although probably unintentional—the inept kidnappers look suspiciously like the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. The third segment actually boasts a couple of effective shocks, although most of the ghostly goings-on (an Atari game playing itself, doors that refuse to stay shut, et al.) are entirely conventional.

Probably too slick for its own good.

Sudden Death (1975)

Caruth C. Byrd Productions, Inc. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Eddie Romero
 PRO: John Ashley, Eddie Romero and J. Skeet Wilson
 SCR: Oscar Williams
 DOP: Justo Paulino
 EXP: Caruth C. Byrd
 SFX: Teofilo Hilario
 MUS: Johnny Pate
 STR: John Ashley, Jess Barker, Caruth C. Byrd, Nancy Conrad, Robert Conrad, Chuck Courtney, Thayer David, Vic Diaz, Angie Ferro, Eddie Garcia, Tony Goncalvez, Jenny Green, Joanna Ignatius, Larry Manetti, Ken Metcalfe, Rocco Montalban, Felton Perry, Conrad Poe, Robert Rivera, Aline Samson, Don Stroud, and Angelo Ventura
 Approximately 83m; Color
 VID: Sudden Death
 [Media Home Entertainment; 84(83)m]

An entire family is brutally slaughtered during a backyard BBQ, save for the loving father who was the intended victim. Seems that he's an important businessman who refused to retire quietly, and so the company for which he is employed is taking things into its own hands. John Shaw (Ashley with shades and a 'stache) is called in to investigate the matter, but—of course—he's being bankrolled by the board of directors and as thus is responsible for "cleaning things up". Enter Harrison Smith (Conrad), a retired covert op Captain and his jive talking buddy Spain Wyatt, who give Shaw a run for his money.

Sudden Death is a genuinely engaging action/spionage flick that offers some surprises along the way (including a particularly shocking finale that is sure to stick with the viewer). Although it glorifies violence to a lesser degree, it doesn't shy away from depicting the

Sudden Death continued...

repercussions of such extreme actions. (Something that modern day cinema rarely bothers with.)

Production values are almost unbearably slick (despite its made for TV feel), but this does little to deter from the present staples of 70s cinema: Lotsa' bell-bottoms, blood-spurting violence, pre-requisite T&A, a great wah-wah peddle score, and fourth-rate kung-fu fights. Hey, and Vic Diaz appears in a small role as a carnival huckster. You take what you can get, I guess.

Engrossing, and well worth the effort for fans of 70s crime thrillers.

Superbeast (1972)

United Artists Corporation [Philippines/USA]

DIR: George Schenck
PRO: George Schenck
SCR: George Schenck
DOP: Nonong Rasca
MFX: John Chambers
MUS: Richard La Salle
STR: Antoinette Bower, Vic Diaz, Alex Flores, John Garwood, Harry Lauter, Craig Little, Nanita, Manny Oheda, Roderick Paulate, Bruno Punzalan, Jose Romulo, and Ricardo Santos
Approximately 93min; Color
ADL: *Half-man, half-monster ripping helpless victims to shreds in his mad hunger!*

A notorious drug smuggler escapes from a jungle prison, and high tails it out of Manila. The plane makes an emergency landing in Guam, and police are forced to shoot the escapee when he gets a little "ugly". Pathologist Alex (Bower) goes to the Philippines to look into the case, and finds that the prison is run by a young doctor who rehabilitates violent criminals with an experimental drug. Unfortunately, this serum has an unpleasant side effect, namely causing its recipients to become evolutionary throwbacks, thus "creating hybrid mutants who are savage as the wildest beast". Furthermore, a wealthy rancher takes advantage of the retrogression by playing "The Most Dangerous Game" with those failures whom need to be disposed.

Fairly typical of Filipino horror fare (without John Ashley to up the charisma quotient), Superbeast is a low-grade, low-key shocker that spends much of its ninety-minute running time focusing on people walking. Just walking. Actress Bower's character is presumably dumbfounded (if not simply dumb) because her oft-quoted line is "Wow." To accommodate the not-so-mysterious goings-on are some lousy make-up effects (go figure) and some nice location shooting.

Along for the ride are—two guesses—Filipino regulars Vic Diaz (as a character named Diaz) and Bruno

Punzalan, Dr. Lorca's bald henchman from the "Blood Island" flicks who played a mute because apparently he didn't know a lick of English.

Strictly for fans of Filipino-American trash. (And you thought Rob Zombie came up with the groovy title all by himself, I bet.) * * * 444

The Thirsty Dead (1974)

International Amusement Corp. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Terry Becker
PRO: Wesley E. de Pue
SCR: Charles Dennis
DOP: Nonong Rasca
MUS: Richard La Salle
STR: Jennifer Billingsley, John Considine, Chiqui da Rosa, Vic Diaz, Tani Guthrie, Judith McConnell, Fredericksa Myers, Rod Navarro, Rick Rohrke, Elena Sampson, and Mary Walters
AKA: *Sedientos de Muerte* [The Thirst Dead]
Approximately 88min; Color
VID: *The Thirsty Dead*
[Interglobal Home Video; 90(88)min]
The Thirsty Dead [King of Video; 88min]
ADL: *They need a special liquid to stay young. It's red, thick and warm!*
(What? McDonald's ketchup? Oh, sorry... that's runny, not thick. The Editor)

Young women are vanishing from the streets of Manila; rumors have it that a Hong Kong based white slavery ring is responsible. Truth is, the women are being chloroformed by bald-headed goons in burgundy hoods and transported (via a boat ride in the sewers) to an isolated community in the mountains. This cult is headed by Ranu, a high-priestess with a hairdo that looks suspiciously like an oversized dog turd, and Baru, a frizzy headed white guy with a really big collar. The reason for their secrecy is supposed to have something to do with the fact they drink blood to stay eternally young, but I think it has more to do with the fact that they'd be arrested for their bad fashion sense.

And I thought that doing a special on Filipino horror and exploitation films would be smooth sailing; this, it seems (along with the Santiago efforts) is what I get for being presumptuous. The Thirsty Dead is damn near unwatchable in its sheer tepidity, and manages to go from bad to downright embarrassing in twenty minutes. Being PG, the sex and violence consists of some skimpy outfits—nary a nipple in sight—and a couple of cut wounds that are quickly healed by magic leaves so as not to be too offending. The film boasts what looks to be recycled set pieces and costuming from an old Star Trek episode (shoot... *any* old Star Trek episode) and the largest collection of ugly, venerable Filipino women

ever to be assembled for one film. Oh, and let's not forget the cultists' god, which is a head sitting in a glass box full of cherry Jell-O.

Vic Diaz (the Philippines' answer to George "Buck" Flower) not only has a bit part as a policeman, but also acted as production coordinator for the turkey.

Where's John Ashley when you need him?

• The Twilight People (1972)

Dimension Pictures, Inc. and Four Associates, Ltd. [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Eddie Romero

PRO: John Ashley and Eddie Romero

SCR: Eddie Romero and Jerome Small

DOP: Freddy Conde

EXP: David Cohen and Larry Woolner

MFX: Antonio Artieda

MUS: Tito Arevalo and Ariston Avelino

STR: John Ashley, Andres Centenera, Eddie Garcia, Cenon Gonzalez, Tony Gosalvez, Pam Grier, Johnny Long, Romeo Mabuto, Charles

MacAuley, Jan Merlin, Ken Metcalfe, Letty

Mirasol, Mona Morena, Roger Ocampo, Kim

Ramos, Max Rojo, Vic Unson, Angelo Ventura,

and Pat Woodell

AKA: Alacan los Monstruos [Attack of the Monsters]

Beasts

Island of the Twilight People

Approximately 80m; Color

VID: The Twilight People

[Interglobal Video Promotions, Ltd.; 84(80)m]

ADL: ANIMAL DESIRES, HUMAN LUST

Man of many talents Matt Farrell (Ashley) is abducted by a mad doctor doing reasonably unethical experiments on a remote island, and whom needs "perfect specimens" to further his questionable research. His "successes" are genetically altered humans—a cat woman, an antelope man, a bat man, and a dog woman—who are eventually freed by Farrell and the doctor's swooning daughter, the group of them trying to find a way off the island before a bored hunter goes after them *ala* The Most Dangerous Game (a popular theme in these films).

This low-budget take on H.G. Wells' The Island of Dr. Moreau may be the worst adaptation of this classic of modern literature, but it far from unengaging. (At least to diehard trash fiends out there.) Ashley reprises the suave, stone-faced archetype of which he made use in the "Blood Island" trilogy, the difference being in the character's name only. Production values are a step-up from those earlier films, but the laughable make-up keeps anyone from taking the proceedings seriously.



One reason why this film has garnered something a footnote in the history books is that it features a young Pam Grier, slumming it herein as the panther woman. When not fleeing from the doctor's henchmen, she takes time out to clean herself, purr, and role around like a contented kitty cat. (Definitely not what one would expect from Foxy Brown.)

Obviously, this "epic" was intended for a general audience—unlike the "Blood Island" flicks—as the gore is tame and underexposed, and the nudity and sexual situations non-existent. But, hey, there's still a lot of fun to be had here. Really, how many films offer the viewer anything nearly as innovative as "batman-cam", hummum?

Having sat through this film at least a dozen times in just as many years, I'm still reasonably coherent, so it can't be all that bad, right?

• Vampira (1994)

See GICK! Volume One, Number One.

• Vampire Hookers (1978)

Cosa Nueva [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Cirio H. Santiago

PRO: Robert E. Waters

SCR: Howard R. Cohen

DOP: John Araojo and Carding Remias

MUS: Jaime Mendoza-Nava

STR: Mark Campbell, John Carradine, Vic Diaz, Katie Dolan, Bruce Fairbairn, Irving Glick, Leo Martinez, Lenka Novak, Karen Stride, Trey Wilson, and Lex Winter

AKA: Sensuous Vampires

Approximately 79m; Color

VID: Vampire Hookers [Continental Video; 82(79)m]
ADL: They kiss and tease but always they please!

Most of this film follows two Navy schmucks trying to get laid, but instead wind up in the clutches of vampire John Carradine, his harem of three scantily-clad



• Vampire Men of the Lost Planet (1972)

Independent-International Film Corp.

[Philippines/USA]

DIR: Al Adamson

PRO: Al Adamson

SCR: Sue McNair

DOP: William G. Troiano and William Zsigmond

EXP: Charles McMullen and Zoe Phillips

MFX: Jean Hewitt

SPX: David L. Hewitt

MUS: Mike Velarde

STR: Joey Benson, Jennifer Bishop, John Carradine, Robert Dix, Theodore Gottlieb, Fred Meyers, Gus Peters, Bruce Powers, Britt Semand, and Vicki Volante

AKA: Creatures of the Prehistoric Planet

Horror a la Sangre de los Monstruos

[Horror of the Blood Horror Monsters]

Horror Creatures of the Prehistoric Planet

Horror of the Blood Monsters

Space Mission of the Lost Planet

Approximately 81m; Color

VID: Horror of the Blood Monsters

[Super Video; 85(81)m]

Horror of the Blood Monsters

[VidAmerica; 85(81)m]

Vampire Men of the Lost Planet

[Entertainment Programs International; 81m]

ADL: THEY EAT HUMAN FLESH!

Vampire Hookers continued...

bloodsuckers, and hunchback henchman Pavo (Diaz). I'm quite certain that this film was intended as a comedy, but even the Filipinos' low tolerance for humor probably kept it from getting any kind of a decent release on the islands.

Okay, load up on some Dramamine, because if the nauseating hand-held camerawork doesn't get yer stomach churning, the script certainly will. Carradine is given ample screen time, but even the character's insistence at spouting Shakespeare at the drop of a hat doesn't add one bit of class to this embarrassing mess. One-liners are prevalent, with one of the vampiresses proclaiming "I'm so sick and tired of these Bloody Marys" being the high point. The *high* point, mind you. (Groan.) And—worst of all—Diaz is reduced to the role of a buck-toothed hunchback with problems of gastronomical proportions. (I think it's safe to assume that if Diaz had any say he would have—at the very least—dispersed with all of the fart jokes.)

Even Troma would pass on this sucker if given the opportunity to distribute it. (It's safe to say that the title is the *only* thing this flick has going for it.)

According to the narrator, the world is being overrun by the undead, due to the fact that "the infected blood of the vampire was carried to Earth millions of years ago by the vampire men of a distant galaxy far beyond the solar system." Having discovered the location of this planet, a scientific expedition headed by John Carradine is sent to look into the source of the plague. There, they discover a prehistoric world inhabited by a clan of cavemen called the Tagani, their long-toothed vampiric antagonists, and a plethora of extinct and mythical life forms.

Unfortunately, the above synopsis simply cannot do justice to the patchwork atrocity that is *Vampire Men of the Lost Planet*. Director Adamson managed to acquire (for next to nothing, I'm sure) the rights to an unknown Filipino fantasy flick from Tamrao Studios. Being that the footage was in B&W, he came up with "Spectrum X", which is a deceptive way to tint the older footage a myriad of colors in order to edit that and the new color footage more seamlessly.

With a small stable of actors, a couple of reels of film stock, and leftover props from *The Wizard of Mars* at his disposal (the latter courtesy of that film's director, David Hewitt, acting here as special effects artist), trash

Film mogul Adamson piece-mealed one of the best of the worst genre films ever misconceived.

The vampires herein boast the longest fangs in the history of cinema (although the well-endowed cave people are still able to one up their bloodsucking earthly kin in that department), and remind one of the denizens in the old Eerie Publications. But if's the monsters from the red planet that steal the show. Not content with woolly mammoths (real elephants with patches of mohair affixed to their hides) dinosaurs (stock footage most likely acquired from such films as *One Billion B.C.*), and vampiric cavemen in leopard-skin Tarzan digs, the scientists' prehistoric destination is also populated by such critters as bat-men (whose body doubles when flying are flimsy kites on strings) and lobster-men (the grooviest of the lot).

As if this wasn't enough, the opening is narrated by horror host Brother Theodore (Gottlieb), and the opening sequences were filmed in Los Angeles in the midst of the Watts riots. (Granted, one has to suffer through talking heads for the first third of the film's running time, but it's well worth it once the recycled Filipino footage kicks in.)

It's hard to imagine that this film was made after the special effects spectacle *2001-A Space Odyssey*. (Maybe *2001* is a *little* slicker, but give me Adamson and his \$20 budgets over Kubrick any day of the week.)

✿ The Woman Hunt (1972)

Four Associates, Ltd./New World Pictures, Inc.

[Philippines/USA]

DIR: Eddie Romero
PRO: John Ashley and Eddie Romero
SCR: David Hoover
DOP: Justo Paulino
EXP: David J. Cohen
SFX: Teofilo Hilario
MUS: Jerry Dadap
STR: Alona Alegre, John Ashley, Liza Bemonte, Alfonso Carvajal, Eddie Garcia, Tony Gonsalvez, Sid Haig, Charlene Jones, Lotis Key, Don Lipman, Ken Metcalfe, Laurie Rose, Ruben Rustia, Paquito Salcedo, Lisa Todd, and Pat Woodell

AKA: Escape
The Highest Bidder
Approximately 75m; Color

VID: The Woman Hunt [Charter: 81(75)m]
ADL: *Women are made for men... TO HUNT!*

A white slavery ring abducts young women from Manila to be taken to an isolated house of ill-repute for wealthy clients with particular tastes. Among the kidnappers are Silas (Haig) and a regretful Tony

(Ashley); overseeing the ring is Spiros, whose escalating sadism is threatening the livelihood of the operation. When he changes the focus from sexual frivolities to "The Most Dangerous Game", things go from bad to worse and its up to Tony to save the captives.

Although the themes here weren't unheard of in Filipino-American cinema, director Eddie Romero adds a modicum of quality to the exploitative staples. Characterization is a notch above, and with actors such as Ashley and Haig at one's disposal, the characters are that much more interesting. (Hey... where's Diaz and Punzalan? Musta' been busy working on another film, and couldn't break away for lunch. Damn.) Some politically incorrect humor weasels its way in as well, as Haig is given some of the best one-liners this side of *The Big Bird Cage*.

Still, exploitation is dutifully given its dues with a fair amount of blood-spurting violence and lotsa' swaying breasts being displayed against an exotic jungle backdrop. No surprise, really, considering that exploitation great Jack Hill (*The Big Bird Cage*) supplied the story on which *The Woman Hunt* was based.

Definitely recommended for John Ashley and Eddie Romero fans.

✿ Wonder Women (1973)

General Film Corporation [Philippines/USA]

DIR: Robert O'Neil
PRO: Ross Hagen
SCR: Robert O'Neil and Lou Whitehill
DOP: Ricardo M. David
EXP: Donald Gottlieb and Ronald Remy
SFX: Jessie Sto. Domingo
MUS: Carson Whitsett
STR: Leila Benitez, Looan Clarke, Roberta Collins, Joe Corners, Maria de Aragon, Rudy de Jesus, Vic Diaz, Joonee Bamboa, Wendy Greene, Claire Hagen, Ross Hagen, Sid Haig, Gail Hansen, Phred Kaufman, Nancy Kwan, Tony Lora, Beau Marks, Bruno Punzalan, Jesus Ramos, Rick Reveke, Ross Rival, Moises Sia, Eleanor Siron, Sal Vaca, Vic Vematsu, and Shirley Washington
AKA: The Deadly and the Beautiful
The Terrible Transplants of Dr. Tsu
Women of Transplant Island
Approximately 81m; Color

A slough of athletes are kidnapped by a group of women and taken to the remote island of Dr. Tsu where they are to be used in transplant procedures that

See Scott's Filipino Video Vault

Continued on page 48

THE TRASH COLLECTOR

THE BLOOD-SOAKED HISTORY OF EERIE PUBLICATIONS

by Scott Aaron Stine

A Fond Look Back at Eerie Publications

My first brush with censorship was at the tender age of five. I was a horror fan from the beginning (having learned to actually read from an issue of Baron Weirwulf's Haunted Library) so comic books—primarily "scary" ones—were the lion's share of my literary consumption at this point in my life. If my parents found this at all perturbing, they didn't outwardly display such misgivings until that fateful day I laid my hands on my first Eerie Publication. (From where I procured it, I can't recall, but I think it may have been my older cousin whom held the same macabre interests as I did, and whom wished to corrupt the already corrupted.) Even though I was already accustomed to "visceral" horror as was offered by Warren Publishing (Creepy, Eerie, Vampirella, et al.), the stories I found in this magazine took "shocks" to a level rarely seen.

To this day, almost twenty-six years later, I distinctly recall two of the stories therein. The opening piece dealt with a young boy who is lured and finally killed by an unseen entity lurking in an incinerator in the basement of his family's new house. (The last panel shows the parents standing in the basement, unable to find their missing son, whilst the reader is privy to his charred remains within the incinerator—thanks to a conveniently stationed "camera". Chilling stuff indeed.) The only other story in this issue that I can recall was a doozy. A young man is invited to drop acid for the first time at a party, and is thrown into a particularly nightmarish trip where he sees his friends horribly murdered. (The result is that he nearly drowns in an ocean of blood and body parts.) When the police arrive at the scene, they—and the reader—discover that it was more than just a bad trip; the young man's "hallucinations" were a slightly askew chronicle of an actual massacre. (Ironically, this selfsame story acquired something of a reputation, and was reprinted numerous times in other Eerie Publications throughout the years.) If I can thank any one thing for my lack of desire to experiment with LSD, it would be this one story. (See... horror comics are beneficial to impressionable children.)





Unfortunately, my parents did not find this material nearly as engaging as I did, even though it did catch their full attention for entirely different reasons. This issue—along with an issue of Eerie and my guillotine model kit—were immediately discarded. (Although I can't say for certain, I have the distinct impression that they were relegated to the burning barrel out behind our house.) Of course, this deterred me little; if anything, it only made me seek out similar fare by trading with friends and acquaintances. Had my parents known that this would simply fuel my interest in harder-edged horror fare, they might not have been so quick to dispose of such pleasures. (As an adult, I honestly cannot blame them for being perturbed by such

material, especially as it was being read by a boy of five, I would have had the same reservations, were it my child. Maybe if they were *six* or *seven*, I wouldn't be so harsh, but *five...*)

Through much of my childhood, I rarely came upon copies of Eerie's output, either on magazine stands or from schoolmates. (From what I can recall, very few stores in my area carried them. From the nauseating covers these magazines often boasted, I'm not surprised in the least *why* they chose not to stock such titles) I wasn't bothered too much, though, as my interest in lurid horror comics was more than sated by Warren's classier—albeit somewhat tamer—horror magazines. Still, those two stories stayed with me, and it wasn't until I was in my mid-twenties that I began avidly collecting Eerie's output. (Even then, the desire to finish my runs of Eerie and Creepy and Vampirella still took priority.) I had stumbled across a few copies in the interim, and it was then I realized just how sophomore Eerie's contents were—reprints or no reprints.

Just a few short years ago, I caught sight of some of the covers I once beheld as a kid. The pangs of nostalgia hit hard, and soon I found myself scouring comic stores and conventions for the issue that made my parents seriously wonder if they were raising a serial killer. I began buying the others, hoping it would help to ease the pain, but, alas...

Several issues later, and with fifty-some odd Eerie titles to my name, I *still* haven't tracked down that one godforsaken issue. Betchya' ten to one it'll be the last one I acquire, too.

Since this pursuit has risen from a passing interest into a full-blown obsession, I began trying to get any information I could on the company behind such rag-tag terrors. Even with the entire Internet at my disposal, nothing came of these inquiries. A few books mentioned Eerie Publishing in passing, but none went into any detail about the company. I presumed it was because nobody took them seriously, but I soon realized it had more to do with the simple, painful fact that information about the company and the people behind it was ill-documented. Eerie Publications—the publishing house responsible for traumatizing so many young readers like myself with its cut-rate, gore-drenched comic books—was a mystery far greater than of the Shroud of Turin. (At least we've proved that *this* religious artifact is an out and out hoax, and even have some good idea as to who perpetrated it. We still don't know if the people behind Eerie took even their own product seriously, or if some of the "names" behind it were even real people and not pseudonyms.)

Well, here's what I know. (Trust me... it ain't much. And what information I've found on Eerie Publications is pretty scant as well.)

The History of Horror Picto-Fiction

The 1960s were—more so than any other decade, save for maybe the 1970s—the perfect breeding ground for such horror-oriented publishers as Eerie and Warren. Monsters had become popular icons, almost a symbolic euphemism for the “freaks” of the day: Hippies, beatniks, and the like. Popular culture had finally accepted them with open arms, although the images of Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster were—more often than not—less frightening caricatures of their former selves. This time period also marked the ebb of censorship, in relation to both sex and violence in the media. It only made sense that some people would take advantage of this and try to breathe new life in the creatures of yesteryear, as horror lacked the dread that was so necessary in keeping it a valid genre. Some of these people were writers and artists who realized the potential to do something important and lasting within the horror field. And others were, well, sleazy entrepreneurs like Eerie Publishing.

Eerie Publishing began publishing black and white, 48 page magazine-sized comics in January of 1966 with the succinctly titled *Weird*. Utilizing reprints they had somehow acquired from several golden age comic companies (Ajax, Farrel, Media and Trojan being the most prominent ones among them), they re-introduced these pre-code horrors to young readers in a format that eluded the censoring touch of the infamous Comics Code Authority. (The selfsame group that crippled such famous companies as EC with their crusade initiated by the publication of Dr. Fredric Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1953 and the resulting Kefauver Senate hearings.)

In 1968, they tried their hand at two more titles, both of which were ultimately one-shots. Although both were typical Eerie publications for the time, one of them—the interestingly titled *Tales from the Crypt*—caught the attention of William Gaines, the man behind EC's notorious comic of the same name. Needless to say, publication of further issues were canceled immediately. The other book, the more innocuous *Tales of Terror*, can't lay any similar claims to fame.

Later that same year, Eerie introduced *Tales of Voodoo*. Apparently, that title and *Weird* were successful enough to inspire them to introduce four more titles in 1969—*Horror Tales*, *Tales from the Tomb*, *Terror Tales*, and *Witches Tales*. With most of these books published every other month, one could easily collect all of Eerie's nearly indistinguishable titles without having to dip too deeply into their piggy-banks. I say indistinguishable because Eerie became quite notorious for not only reprinting material from pre-code horror comics (some of which were either uncensored originals or “touched-up” versions that allowed for more blood-

shed), but for also reprinting stories and cover art from their other books. Artwork from some of their covers were even piece-mealed to make a “different” cover for a third title, which caused a certain amount of *déjà vu* and disorientation not only to readers of their day, but even to today's collectors who are familiar with their incessant recycling.

Many of these titles were discontinued by 1974, although a few were brought back in 1975, limping along until their final demise in the late 70s. (*Weird*—their flagship book—somehow managed to make it into the early 80s, but apparently it did not appeal to the readership of this new decade.) There was also at least one offshoot book, *Weird Vampire Tales*, that—although printed by “Modern Day Periodicals”—contained nothing but reprints from the more familiar Eerie Publications. Its days were numbered as well. (Currently, I know only of two issues; the fact that they bear a volume and an issue number means little, as you will soon learn.)

With the public's interest changing from horror to more science fiction-oriented fare in the late 1970s (due much in part to the overwhelming success of *Star Wars*), Eerie tried its hand at a line of magazines devoted to the genre. Changing their imprint from “Eerie Publications” to “Stories, Layouts & Press”, they published a handful of titles which were mostly devoted to science fiction films and TV. (Their only science fiction comic magazine from this line, *Gasm*, was—despite contributions from a number of extremely talented artists and writers, John Workman and Richard Corben among them—little more than a cheap knock-off of the groundbreaking publication, *Heavy Metal*.)

Eerie Publishing... the Bane of Collectors Everywhere

It is difficult to determine exactly how long some of these series ran, or for exactly how many issues, due to their erratic and sometimes arbitrary numbering system. Assuming all of the *dates* are correct, one can still see where problems can arise when collecting entire runs of Eerie's different series.

For starters, their flagship book *Weird* was listed as being “Volume 1, Number 10”. Although—in many cases—volumes refer to the year of publication, and numbers to corresponding months, the fact that this “number 10” was published in January and not October (as one might surmise) makes this assumption a fallible tool. (Some of the titles also took some artistic license as to the actual order of numbers themselves, having two immediately follow three and back to four, or skipping numbers entirely for no other reason than to distract collectors from the previous typographical mishap.)

Even *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*—the accepted authority on all things comics—is at a loss

as to what issues actually exist or not, due to the scarcity of some issues as well as these aforementioned mathematical enigmas. The fact that online collecting—especially through such Internet auction sites as eBay—has made such old magazines more accessible to collectors everywhere has brought to light issues previously thought nonexistent, or vice versa. (Immediately following this article, I've included what is to my knowledge the most extensive record of Eerie Publications and important technical information. I've also included a more realistic price guide as to the actual worth of these pieces on the open market. Although Overstreet's guides for Eerie Publications may have been valid at one time, the actual prices of these books sold online coupled with the massive "warehouse finds" in recent years have made them much cheaper to acquire than what they would lead you to believe.)

The Men Behind the Monsters

The only reference I found that actually took the effort to find out who were responsible for Eerie's ghastly contrivances was Stephen Sennitt's *Ghastly Terror* from Headpress' Critical Vision imprint, published in 1999. (Unfortunately, this offered little more than what could be ascertained by simply reading a handful of Eerie's books, thanks to their elusiveness.) Eerie Publications was founded by one Mel Lenny, and operated out of 222 Park Avenue South, New York. The main staff consisted of people not unfamiliar with the industry. The Editor, Carl Burgos, was responsible for creating the original Human Torch for Marvel's predecessor Timely Comics. The Art Director and Art Editor—Irving Fass and Ezra Jackson, respectively—were also veterans of comics' Golden Age.

Although most of the talents behind the reprinted material can be traced back to their rightful writers and artists, the questionable "talents" behind the new pieces were a mishmash of second-rate professionals (Dick Ayers, Chic Stone, the aforementioned Ezra Jackson, and Jerry Iger's work-for-hire studio trainees from "the Iger Shop") to unknowns who were allowed to sign their often amateurish works. (Hector Castello, Reynosa, Oscar Fraga, Casadei, Macagno, and Stepancich, to name but a few of the contributors.) Occasionally, some of the art was comparable to the "adequate" illustrations used as filler in Warren's superior magazines, but the stories themselves rarely rose to such a level, simply reiterating the ham-fisted horrors found in the pre-code stories that Eerie was so fond of pilfering.

The Horror of It All

Although the quality of the cover art is rarely much better than the guts of the magazine, the ghoulishly contrived paintings that adorned Eerie's magazines are responsible for much of their popularity years later. Recycled artwork aside, these covers began to follow a certain formula by the early 1970s (although a couple made a few forays into the not-as-lucrative field of science fiction.) First, all of the major staples of monsterdom were drawn from—the vampire, the werewolf, the mummy, and the Frankenstein Monster being the most used and abused. Second, the cover almost invariably depicted a scantily clad female victim, either

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Continued on page 42





Horror Tales (January 1971)



Horror Tales (August 1973)



Tales from the Tomb (June 1970)

PRICE GUIDE TO EERIE PUBLICATIONS

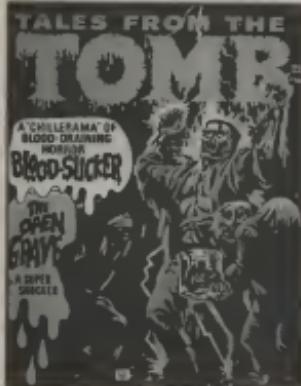
*Please Note: Prices given are for Near Mint copies. Copies in Fine condition are worth about a third of Near Mint, and those in Good are about a third of that. Please consult *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* for more details on grading comics.*

Dracula Classics (1976)

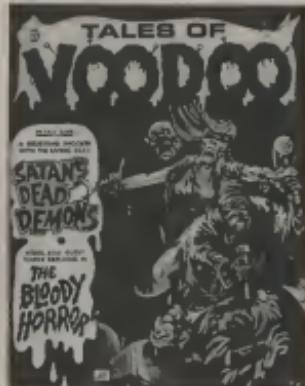
Volume 1, Number 1 (1976) \$1.00 \$10.00

Horror Tales (1969-1979) (Becomes Classic Horror Tales circa 1976)

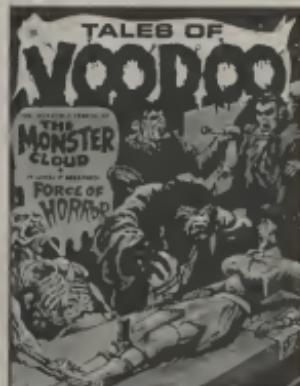
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Volume 1, Number 8	(August 1969) 35¢	\$2.00
Volume 1, Number 9	(October 1969) 35¢	\$2.00
Volume 2, Number 1	(January 1970) 35¢	\$2.00
Volume 2, Number 2	(March 1970) 50¢	\$2.00
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Volume 6, Number 2	(April 1974) 60¢	\$2.00
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Volume 1, Number 195	(March 2002) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 196	(May 2002) 50¢	\$18.00
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Volume 1, Number 201	(March 2003) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 202	(May 2003) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 203	(July 2003) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 204	(September 2003) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 205	(November 2003) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 206	(January 2004) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 207	(March 2004) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 208	(May 2004) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 209	(July 2004) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 210	(September 2004) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 211	(November 2004) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 212	(January 2005) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 213	(March 2005) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 214	(May 2005) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 215	(July 2005) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 216	(September 2005) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 217	(November 2005) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 218	(January 2006) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 219	(March 2006) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 220	(May 2006) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 221	(July 2006) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 222	(September 2006) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 223	(November 2006) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 224	(January 2007) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 225	(March 2007) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 226	(May 2007) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 227	(July 2007) 50¢	\$18.00
Volume 1, Number 228	(September 2007) 5	



Tales from the Tomb (March 1973)



Tales of Voodoo (December 1972)



Tales of Voodoo (March 1973)

Tales from the Tomb continued...

Volume 1, Number 8	(November 1969) 35¢
Volume 2, Number 1	(February 1970) 35¢
Volume 2, Number 2	(April 1970) 50¢
Volume 2, Number 3	(June 1970) 50¢
Volume 2, Number 4	(August 1970) 50¢
Volume 2, Number 5	(October 1970) 50¢
Volume 2, Number 6	(December 1970) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 1	(1971) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 2	(1971) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 3	(1971) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 6	(December 1971) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 1	(February 1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 2	(1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 3	(1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 4	(September 1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 5	(November 1972) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 1	(January 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 2	(March 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 3	(May 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 4	(July 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 5	(September 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 6	(November 1973) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 1	(January 1974) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 2	(March 1974) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 3	(May 1974) 75¢
Volume 6, Number 4	(July 1974) 75¢
Volume 6, Number 5	(September 1974) 75¢
Volume 6, Number 6	(November 1974) 75¢
Volume 7, Number 1	(February 1975) 75¢
Volume 7, Number 2	(April 1975)
Volume 7, Number 3	(June 1975)

• Tales of Terror (1968)

Volume 1, Number 1	(Summer 1968) 35¢
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• Tales of Voodoo (1968-1974)

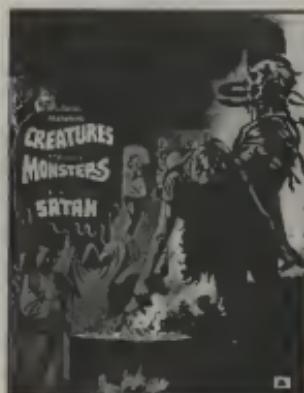
Volume 1, Number 11	(November 1968) 35¢
Volume 2, Number 1	(March 1969) 35¢
Volume 2, Number 2	(May 1969) 35¢
Volume 2, Number 3	(July 1969) 35¢
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Volume 3, Number 1	(January 1970) 35¢
Volume 3, Number 2	(March 1970) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 3	(May 1970) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 4	(July 1970) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 5	(September 1970) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 6	(November 1970) 50¢
Volume 4, Number 1	(January 1971) 50¢
Volume 4, Number 2	(March 1971) 50¢
Volume 4, Number 3	(May 1971) 50¢
Volume 4, Number 4	(July 1971) 50¢
Volume 4, Number 5	(September 1971) 50¢
Volume 4, Number 6	(November 1971) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 1	(1972) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 2	(1972) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 3	(1972) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 4	(June 1972) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 5	(August 1972) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 6	(October 1972) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 7	(December 1972) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 1	(January 1973) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 2	(March 1973) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 3	(May 1973) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 4	(July 1973) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 5	(September 1973) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 6	(November 1973) 60¢
Volume 7, Number 1	(January 1974) 60¢
Volume 7, Number 2	(March 1974) 60¢
Volume 7, Number 3	(May 1974) 75¢
Volume 7, Number 4	(July 1974) 75¢
Volume 7, Number 5	(September 1974) 75¢
Volume 7, Number 6	(November 1974) 75¢



Tales of Voodoo (November 1973)



Terror Tales (November 1970)



Terror Tales (April 1972)

• Terror Tales (1969-1978)

Volume 1, Number 7	(March 1969) 35¢
Volume 1, Number 8	(May 1969) 35¢
Volume 1, Number 9	(July 1969) 35¢
Volume 2, Number 1	(January 1970) 35¢
Volume 2, Number 2	(March 1970) 50¢
Volume 2, Number 3	(May 1970) 50¢
Volume 2, Number 4	(July 1970) 50¢
Volume 2, Number 5	(September 1970) 50¢
Volume 2, Number 6	(November 1970) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 1	(January 1971) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 2	(March 1971) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 3	(May 1971) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 4	(July 1971) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 5	(September 1971) 50¢
Volume 3, Number 6	(November 1971) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 1	(January 1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 2	(March 1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 3	(April 1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 4	(June 1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 5	(August 1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 6	(October 1972) 60¢
Volume 4, Number 7	(December 1972) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 1	(February 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 2	(April 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 3	(June 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 4	(August 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 5	(October 1973) 60¢
Volume 5, Number 6	(December 1973) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 1	(February 1974) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 2	(April 1974) 60¢
Volume 6, Number 3	(June 1974) 75¢
Volume 6, Number 4	(August 1974) 75¢
Volume 6, Number 5	(October 1974) 75¢
Volume 6, Number 6	(December 1974) 75¢
Volume 7, Number 1	(April 1976) \$18.00
Volume 7, Number 3	(June 1976) \$18.00

Volume 7, Number 4

(1976) \$18.00

Volume 8, Number 1

(1977) \$18.00

Volume 8, Number 2

(1977) \$18.00

Volume 8, Number 3

(October 1977) \$1.50

Volume 9, Number 2

(1978) \$18.00

Volume 9, Number 3

(April 1978) \$1.50

Volume 9, Number 4

(1978) \$18.00

• Weird (1966-1981)

(Became Weird Tales circa 1981)

Volume 1, Number 10

(January 1966) 35¢

Volume 1, Number 11

(1966) 35¢

Volume 1, Number 12

(December 1966) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 1

(1967) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 2

(1967) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 3

(1967) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 4

(October 1967) 35¢

Volume 3, Number 1

(January 1968) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 6

(April 1968) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 7

(June 1968) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 8

(August 1968) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 9

(October 1968) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 10

(December 1968) 35¢

Volume 3, Number 1

(February 1969) 35¢

Volume 3, Number 2

(1969) 35¢

Volume 3, Number 3

(1969) 35¢

Volume 3, Number 4

(September 1969) 35¢

Volume 2, Number 5

(December 1969) 35¢

Volume 4, Number 1

(February 1970) 35¢

Volume 4, Number 2

(April 1970) 50¢

Volume 4, Number 3

(June 1970) 50¢

Volume 4, Number 4

(August 1970) 50¢

Volume 4, Number 5

(October 1970) 50¢

Volume 4, Number 6

(December 1970) 50¢

Volume 5, Number 1

(February 1971) 50¢

Volume 5, Number 2

(April 1971) 50¢

Volume 5, Number 3

(June 1971) 50¢



Terror Tales (June 1974)



Weird (January 1966)



Weird (October 1973)

Weird continued...

Volume 5, Number 4	(August 1971) 50¢	\$20.00	Volume 1, Number 7	(July 1969) 35¢	\$32.00
Volume 5, Number 5	(October 1971) 50¢	\$20.00	Volume 1, Number 8	(September 1969) 35¢	\$24.00
Volume 5, Number 6	(December 1971) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 1, Number 9	(November 1969) 35¢	\$24.00
Volume 6, Number 1	(1972) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 2, Number 1	(February 1970) 50¢	\$22.00
Volume 6, Number 2	(1972) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 2, Number 2	(April 1970) 50¢	\$22.00
Volume 6, Number 3	(April 1972) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 2, Number 3	(June 1970) 50¢	\$22.00
Volume 6, Number 4	(1972) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 2, Number 4	(August 1970) 50¢	\$22.00
Volume 6, Number 5	(1972) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 2, Number 5	(October 1970) 50¢	\$22.00
Volume 6, Number 6	(1972) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 2, Number 6	(December 1970) 50¢	\$22.00
Volume 6, Number 7	(1972) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 3, Number 1	(February 1971) 50¢	\$20.00
Volume 7, Number 1	(February 1973) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 3, Number 2	(April 1971) 50¢	\$20.00
Volume 7, Number 2	(March 1973) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 3, Number 3	(June 1971) 50¢	\$20.00
Volume 7, Number 3	(April 1973) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 3, Number 4	(August 1971) 50¢	\$20.00
Volume 7, Number 4	(June 1973) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 3, Number 5	(October 1971) 50¢	\$20.00
Volume 7, Number 5	(August 1973) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 3, Number 6	(December 1971) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 7, Number 6	(October 1973) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 4, Number 1	(January 1972) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 7, Number 7	(December 1973) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 4, Number 2	(March 1972) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 8, Number 1	(February 1974) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 4, Number 3	(May 1972) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 8, Number 2	(April 1974) 60¢	\$20.00	Volume 4, Number 4	(July 1972) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 8, Number 3	(June 1974) 75¢	\$20.00	Volume 4, Number 5	(September 1972) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 8, Number 4	(August 1974) 75¢	\$20.00	Volume 4, Number 6	(November 1972) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 8, Number 1	(October 1974) 75¢	\$20.00	Volume 5, Number 1	(January 1973) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 8, Number 6	(December 1974) 75¢	\$20.00	Volume 5, Number 2	(March 1973) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 9, Number 1	(January 1975)	\$20.00	Volume 5, Number 3	(May 1973) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 9, Number 2	(June 1976)	\$18.00	Volume 5, Number 4	(July 1973) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 9, Number 3	(1976)	\$18.00	Volume 5, Number 5	(September 1973) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 9, Number 4	(December 1976) \$1.25	\$18.00	Volume 5, Number 6	(November 1973) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 10, Number 1	(1977)	\$18.00	Volume 6, Number 1	(January 1974) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 10, Number 2	(1977)	\$18.00	Volume 6, Number 2	(March 1974) 60¢	\$20.00
Volume 10, Number 3	(1977)	\$18.00	Volume 6, Number 3	(May 1974) 75¢	\$20.00
Volume 11, Number 1	(1978)	\$18.00	Volume 6, Number 4	(July 1974) 75¢	\$20.00
Volume 11, Number 2	(1978)	\$18.00	Volume 6, Number 5	(1974) 75¢	\$20.00
Volume 11, Number 3	(September 1978) \$1.50	\$18.00	Volume 6, Number 6	(1974) 75¢	\$20.00
Volume 11, Number 4	(1978)	\$18.00	Volume 7, Number 1	(February 1975)	\$20.00
Volume 12, Number 4	(December 1979) \$1.75	\$18.00			
Volume 14, Number 2	(July 1981) \$2.50	\$18.00			



Weird (July 1981)



Witches Tales (January 1973)



Witches Tales (September 1973)

Misc. Offshoot Publications

Gasm (1977-1978)

Stories, Layouts & Press

Volume 1, Number 1	(November 1977)	\$1.50	\$16.00
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Star Battles (1978)

Stories, Layouts & Press

Volume 1, Number 4	(Winter 1978)	\$1.75	\$6.00
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Star Warp (1978)

Stories, Layouts & Press

Volume 1, Number 3	(June 1978)	\$1.50	\$6.00
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Weird Vampire Tales

Modern Day Periodicals

Volume 3, Number 1	(April 1979)	\$1.75	\$12.00
Volume 3, Number 2	(July 1979)	\$1.75	\$12.00
Volume 3, Number 3	(October 1979)	\$1.75	\$12.00
Volume 3, Number 4	(December 1979)	\$1.75	\$12.00
Volume 4, Number 1	(January 1980)	\$1.75	\$12.00
Volume 4, Number 2	(April 1980)	\$1.95	\$12.00



Weird Vampire Tales (April 1980)



New York State residents add 8% sales tax

Scot's Video Vault
Continued from page 9

Octaman (1971)

Filmers Guild [USA]
DIR: Harry Essex
PRO: Michael Kraife
SCR: Harry Essex
DOP: Robert Caramico
MFX: Rick Baker and Doug Beswick
MUS: Post Production Associates
STR: Pier Angeli, Jax Jason Carroll, Richard Cohen, Jeff Essex, Norman Fields, Jerome Guardino, Buck Kartalian, Kerwin Mathews, Jeff Morrow, Octaman, Samuel Peloso, Wally Rose, and Robert Warner
VID: Octaman [Video Gems; 79(78)m]
ADL: *It will squeeze you dead and suck you dry!*

Underwater nuclear testing in the Pacific Ocean dredges up some interesting genetic mutations when a research scientist in Mexico discovers a hybrid baby octopus. Of course, daddy doesn't appreciate having his offspring nailed to a dissecting table and put to the microscope, so he comes lumbering out of the water to wreak havoc on the researchers and a couple of carnies types who are funding the operation.

This sad updating of *Creature from the Black Lagoon* proves that the spirit of Ed Wood, Jr. was still alive and kicking in the 1970s. Outside of the jerky photography, bad insert dubbing, poor editing, and forced gore we are also subjected to one of Rick Baker's earliest creations. Unfortunately, this example of his pre-Hollywood work is little more than a bigger-budgeted take on the aquatic denizens from *Sid & Marty Kroff's Sigmund and the Sea Monsters*. (Plaster a smile on this sucker, and it won't scare the little kiddies one iota, I assure you.)

Actor Kerwin Mathews started out his career starring in such memorable Ray Harryhausen-driven fantasy films as *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958) and *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* (1960), but wound up slumming about in such wanting productions as this and *Nightmare in Blood* by the 1970s. Although the rest of the cast is passable, I seriously doubt any of them went on to do anything substantial after this affair.

With "octa-vision"! (Forget the fact that the single aperture in each of the creature's eyes wouldn't give him a multi-faceted view of the world like an insect's. It still makes for some wonderfully nauseating camerawork.)

Made about twenty, maybe even thirty years too late, but still a heck of a lotta' fun.

Michael says...

Here it is at last! We've finally unearthed the lost classic that put Rick Baker on the map as the best special effects artist ever! And I'm a bloody liar.

*Mr. Baker should hang his head in shame at this stinky excuse of a movie, even though he may have did the best with what he had to work with. The close-up scenes of Octaman's head look nice, but everything else is godawful and looks like the man in a rubber suit that it is. (If you added some martial arts, you'd swear that this was an episode of *The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*. Or—had he been fifty feet tall—he wouldn't be out of place in *Godzilla Vs. King Kong*. But I digress.)*

There is a surprising amount of gore (not good mind you, but it doesn't hurt) and a toy rubber octopus pulled around by a string. This coupled up with the poor editing make for some funny scenes, in particular where the strings holding Octaman's fake arms to the actor's real ones break, but are immediately reattached between edits, only to be broken again.

*The only thing worse than the special effects is the film's logic, as in one scene where a fire is lit around Octaman so that "it will burn up all of the oxygen around him." So much for science. Stock footage abounds to the point that one wonders if it wasn't a *National Geographic* nature show that someone decided to build a movie around.*

*Of course, the best part of this film is the unintentional humor, which is why I have to recommend it. At heart, *Octaman* is a fun, silly monster movie that made me feel like I was seven years old kid again.*

Orloff y el Hombre Invisible

[Orloff and the Invisible Man] (1970)

Celia Films [France] Productions Mezquiriz [Spain]

DIR: Pierre Chevalier
PRO: Marius Leseur
SCR: Pierre Chevalier
DOP: Raymond Heil
SFX: Juan Fortuny and Procédé Kinotechnique
MUS: Camille Sauvage
STR: Arlette Balkis, Eugene Berthier, Brigitte Carva, May Chartrette, Isabel del Rio, Christian Forges, Evane Hanska, Fernando Sancho, Francisco Valladares, and Howard Vernon
AKA: *The Invisible Dead*
Love Life of the Invisible Man
Orloff Against the Invisible Man
Approximately 79m; Color
VID: *The Invisible Dead* [Wizard Video; 90(79)m]
ADL: *GOD HELP US IF THEY RISE AGAIN!!!*

Orloff y el Hombre Invisible continued...

A doctor makes a house call to a biologist by the curious name of Dr. Orloff (Howard Vernon), and finds out he was sent for by his desperate—and slightly wiggy—daughter. She claims to be afforded such phenomena as not being able to see her reflection in a mirror and chalks it up to an invisible presence. (Sounds logical to me.) The doctor is forced to spend the night, and finds out that, yes, there is some truth to the woman's story. While "studying the phenomenon of transparency" (Huh?) Orloff has succeeded in creating an invisible, blood-drinking ape creature. Furthermore, it has a penchant for raping the castle's female inhabitants (usually under Orloff's orders).

Okay, so what's worse than a Jesse Franco film? Easy. Someone else trying to make a Jesse Franco film. No matter what title you see this film under, it is a dreary production indeed.

This slice of sleazy gothic Euro-fare is built on a silly premise and held together precariously with whatever exploitative staples the filmmakers could muster. When the film isn't wallowing in gratuity (gratuitous nudity, gratuitous zooms, gratuitous flashbacks, et al.) we are subjected to tedious dialogue (atrocious dubbing notwithstanding) and some serious suspension of disbelief.

When the highlight of a film is watching an actress pretend she's being violated by an invisible, blood-drinking ape creature, you know you're hitting bottom. (Of course, some of us kind of like it down here.)

Michael says...

For no apparent reason than padding, the filmmakers of this gothic period piece decided to throw in lots of pointless close-ups of inanimate objects, nature scenes, and ugly faces. Occasionally, some of the inanimate objects are being moved around by the film's invisible man, and—although you can rarely see the strings—it all looks quite hokey. The camera also dwells on the film's abundance of nudity, in particular during an invisible man rape scene. (This is horribly unconvincing, as the woman's legs are never spread to accommodate her rapist, so it looks more like a case of intense cuddling.) Also utilized are some bad stop motion effects to show the invisible man's footprints in the mud, talcum powder, whatever. To add insult to injury, when we finally do see the invisible man, he is little more than a transparent Neanderthal, and looks nothing like the creature shown on the video box.

Mind numbing, but not as unwatchable as I expected it to be.

The Trash Collector

Continued from page 35

being pursued by one of the aforementioned beasties, or being dismembered by the same. The third, was the act of mutilation itself: Dismembering, decapitating, impaling, eviscerating, what have you. Now, it was up to the artists to find as many "original" ways to combine the three staples. As they soon learned, one of the best ways to design a cover suited to *Eerie*'s needs was to overlap the three until the lines became blurred, no matter how contrived the outcome may be. Here are some examples of the outrageous contrivances that readers of *Eerie*'s magazines took for granted in their hey day.

In a cavern that apparently doubles as a medical lab, an almost indescribable satyr like ghoul with metal hooks on rings holding one eye shut exposes its internal organs using a conveniently placed zipper in its chest. A disgusted big-busted vampiress looks on, holding a bloody heart. (Horror Tales, January 1971)

In another cavernous abode, a really pissed off werewolf drives a long stake through the chest of a vampire bearing Frankensteinian stitches, who has just snacked on a bloodied victim whose perky headlights would put victims of modern-day silicone implants to shame. In the background lurks the remains of a human skeleton, picked clean, and another furry beastie whose

allegiance is uncertain.

(Horror Tales, August 1973)

What looks to be the Frankenstein Monster's red-headed, big-bosomed sister is bound to a slab, a drooling lycanthrope spattered with blood coming in for the kill. In the background, her big brother is staking a bat-winged dime-store Dracula to the wall. A corpse sits near the victim's feet, lips sewn and internal organs exposed. (Tales of Voodoo, March 1973)

Again, the stories therein rarely lived up to the expectations offered by the grisly covers, but the same could be said for most other comics or books on the market. And quality plays no part in our love for these magazines; if anything, the utter lack thereof is what draws us. For the same reason many of us wallow in the seedy excesses of exploitative horror films from the 1960s and 1970s, we look for the equivalent in these old dog-eared treasures of yesteryear. And—for some of us—it is the taboo factor that guides us further—the forbidden fruit deprived us by well-meaning parents. (Now if I can only get that goddamn model guillotine back without spending a year's wages on it, I might learn to forgive and forget.)





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Up From the Depths

Continued from page 2

more than is necessary.) After that, I shied away from such dealers for several years, but before you could say "Beat me senseless, please, I deserve it," I found myself groveling at their feet once again. Mr. Bootlegger... meet Mr. Bootlicker.

Again, I've enjoyed actually meeting or talking to many of these people in person; I've often run up a lofty telephone bill, or neglected possible customers at a collectibles show in order to chat with them about obscure films and the like. One gentlemen—by far one of the most respected bootleggers around—came through for me and rushed a couple of very large orders (almost a thousand bucks worth) so I would have the films in time for a book deadline. For this I am still grateful. (Ironic, then, that this book contract was dumped shortly thereafter, with me receiving only a two-hundred and fifty dollar advance. Hell, I was unemployed and didn't need to eat anyway.) One of the films I received in the second batch wasn't a copy from an uncut European print like I expected, but simply a dupe off of a tape I could have rented from any local Blockbuster. (Hmmm... rent it for a couple of bucks, or cough up ten dollars for a second-hand copy, I dunno...)

Needless to say, I made mention of this in a letter to him, and he flew off the handle. How dare I question his ethics, he said in so many words; he simply gave me what I asked for. True, I didn't think to question him about the source of the print, and that was because I expected it to be a PAL conversion, not a dupe from an out of print—but still extremely common—US video release. (I've since bought a studio boxed version of this film from a Blockbuster ninety-nine cent bin barely fifteen minutes away from me.)

But he gave me such a discount on the films I ordered that I shouldn't have balked at this one tiny transgression, right? Well, less than a month later, he was offering a special that allowed people to get films for the same price I acquired them, without having to buy so fucking many of them. Regardless, I haven't heard from him since, even though I've written him numerous times. So, I withdraw any and all apologies. Of course people are gonna' call your ethics into question. You're a fuckin' bootlegger, fer cryin' out loud! Regardless of any justifications, you make money by selling copies of other people's movies. What in the hell did you expect? Sheesh.

Another bootlegger (sorry, I can't think of another euphemism without sounding completely venomous) whom I've known for many years is much further down on the food chain. I've continued to trade

with him, continually falling for his claims of having the "best copies available" even though three of the tapes I've purchased from him were dupes off of prints sold by Luminous Film & Video Wurks. (It's the pesky little onscreen logo that gave it away, you moron.) At least most of the films I purchased from the previously mentioned businessman were clear enough to where I could obtain credits from the prints; this fellow's tapes, however, couldn't have been any better than third or fourth generation. (Sure, his come with some purdy clamshell artwork—save for the half-assed typewritten synopsis he's pasted on the backs before reproducing them, obscuring pictures and credits alike—but these fuzzy color photocopies aren't worth the fifteen bucks one must shell out for his tapes. Better to spend an extra bucks and go straight to Luminous, if you want the film that bad.)

I also broke down and bought from him a copy of *Holocausto Canibal*, which he said was taken from the laserdisc. Technically, it was, but it wasn't a second-generation copy as was implied. Instead, it appeared to have been taken from a tape copy of the disc master, as—apparently—it was too difficult to flip the disc over every time he dubbed it. (I'm sorry... I forgot about the high overhead on bootlegs, and that twenty bucks doesn't afford the customer such luxuries.) Besides, when it comes to the business side of things, he's just plain incompetent... but that's neither here nor there.

Now that we've covered "fair" to "muddlin", let's focus on the true ephemeromorphs in the business: People who feel ethics should have no bearing in their pursuits, whose morals keep anyone with the least bit of common sense upwind of their persons. One such lout regularly attends the comics shows I frequent in the Northwest, and is always happy to see us there. Why? Because he eagerly buys any tapes Michael and myself are willing to sell for three dollars or less; inevitably, copies of these selfsame films show up on his table at the next convention, grainy Xeroxed covers and all. It doesn't matter if the film can still be readily picked up from any one of the many Suncoast Video stores scattered across the United States. It doesn't matter if people can purchase the real thing new for ten bucks instead of shelling out the same for something he's transferred from a previously rented tape using a two-head machine and recycled blanks he purchased from a seasonal Goodwill sale, adding insult to injury by recording it in EP. It simply does *not* matter to him. If there's money to be had by taking advantage of the naïve, like every televangelist and palm reader with a 900 number before him, he'll readily do so.

So, screw the entire lot of them, I now say. I don't need their money, even if it means this magazine may just go belly up because of it. (Okay, so Yours Truly

is exaggerating. I can honestly say that when GICK! does issue its last gasp, it will because I'm sick and tired of reviewing crappy horror films, and not because of finances. If money had any bearing on this rag seeing the light of day, you wouldn't be "listening" to me whining now.) So, if you decide to buy from anyone I've sold space to herein in the past—or any other bootlegger currently making the rounds—remember that it's a crap shoot at best. Emphasis on "crap". (To expect quality control in just such a business is not only naive, but, well, less than wise.) Granted, I haven't actually seen the product some of these advertisers offer, but I think I can safely assume that—from past experience—they won't surprise me in the least with their "superior quality" and "great selections." (Christ, it's only a fuckin' copy.)

"So Many Bad Films... So Few Brain Cells"

Scott Aaron Sline 6/1/00

Guest Editorial

by Michael von Sacher-Masoch

Mr. Sline has recently told me that he no longer wishes to be a bootlicker to bootleggers. Normally, I would have agreed with him. Why, a few issues back I wrote an editorial denouncing them myself, but have since had a change of heart. I put myself in their shoes, and realized just how rough these people have it.

Think about it. You start your day by being woken up by your mother telling you that, even though you live in her basement, you are not exempt from doing a little housework now and then. After shooing her away with promises of "later," you proceed with yet another grueling workday. First, you dig around in a box of used video tapes which your mother uses to record her daily soaps on. Finding one without labels (it's such a hassle to peel those damn things off) you put it in the VCR you bought at a garage sale the previous summer for a steal. Then—this is where things get complicated—you take a dupe of a dupe duped from another bootlegger's dupe so you can dupe it, and put that in the player. Anyway, while it's recording, you make yourself as presentable as humanly possible without taking a shower. (You'll just work up a sweat anyway.) Then it's off to the corner 7-11 so you can make a color photocopy of some other bootlegger's cover. (It's got their logo on it, but an El Marko takes care of that.) You get home just as the tape is finishing—you had to stop by McDonald's for breakfast, after all—

and throw in another couple of tapes. (Sometimes this grueling process is repeated two or maybe even three times over the course of a day.) Worn out from having to insert the cover in the recycled clamshell that you salvaged from the garbage bin behind Blockbuster's, you turn in for a nap until the second tape is done. The next hour is a blur, as you go from one box in your closet to another, trying to find some unused video labels. The printer's broken, so you end up having to write them out by hand with the El Marko. Finishing the third tape calls for a beer, and then it's off to bed until The X-Files at nine.

When one sees all that is involved, it's no wonder why bootleggers are forced to charge ten to twenty dollars for their films. It's a thankless job, to be sure, but now it's time we give these people a pat on the back and give them some show of appreciation. They are, after all, risking life and limb by making available these otherwise rare videos at a reasonable price. So, the quality leaves something to be desired, but can they be faulted for this? Hardly. We are in no position to complain; beggars can't be choosers, after all. Those who persist in whining can just apply for their own membership at Hollywood Video.

Our hats are off to you.

Michael von Sacher-Masoch 6/2/00

GICK! would like to thank Cyclone Books, for supplying us with so many nifty lobby cards with which to take the place of all those nasty third-generation advertisements; to the Church of Satan, for their encouragement; and—of course—thanks go out to all of our friends and family that have helped out on this issue, through their support, their contributions (thanks again for the laser printer, Dad), and/or through their mutual decision to *not* have us committed.

Scott still reserves some of his ever-growing hate and discontent for such neinrades as H.A. (Alan) Hale of All Horror Video and Hart D. Fisher, publisher of Boneyard Press and editor of Verotik; for such incompetent bastards as the shambling mound that inhabits the Broadway Postal Station; and for Compaq, for making such shitty computers. (Can you say "buggy", boys and girls? I knew you could.) The remainder of his ire is clogging up cyberspace in the form of nasty e-mails chastising the dishonest and presumptuous individuals who strive to make eBay a four-letter word.

Letters to the Editor



PO Box 5273, Everett, WA 98206-5273

Letters! We've got letters! So many goddamn letters that we can't print them all, or in their entirety! (Of course, one was from my mother wanting to know why I haven't called, and one was a reminder from the library about some overdue books, and another was from a Realty Company telling us that our landlord kicked the bucket and that they were selling our house out from under us, and, well, here's the more uplifting ones...)

Dear Scott:

Peggy and I want to thank you for the spectacular third issue of GICK! It is a delight to read, and really captures for me the same feeling I had when I was a child reading Forry's Famous Monsters of Filmland. You discuss with humor and candor a whole passle of films, many of which I've not yet seen, which inspire me to have some sessions of all night trash video viewing.

Keep up the excellent work! You and Michael are really beginning an enterprise that embodies the spirit that has been lost in so many commercial publications. There's passion and obsession in every paragraph, so sorely needed in today's world of homogenized bloodless mediocrity.

Hail GICK!

Beast wishes!

Peter H. Gilmore

For those who aren't aware of it, Peter Gilmore and Peggy Nadramia are the accommodating souls who granted us permission to use--and supplied us with--pics of the late great Anton LaVey for our "The Devil His Dues" issue. Needless to say, Mr. Gilmore's kind words are high praise indeed. The Editor

Scott,

I just wanted to let you know I received the back issues of GICK! and Painful Excursions and have been enjoying them immensely, as the stack of them on my bedside table would testify to. Read 'em almost every night. Your reviews are knee-slappers, and are very well-written and descriptive. You're one of the few fanzine writers who doesn't overuse "cussing". I'm glad someone else out there besides Michael Weldon chronicles

these lost OOP videotape gems. You may want to consider doing a reference book on old early-mid '80s horror/exploitation videos someday, being a leading authority. Are subscriptions a reality in the future???

Good luck, bro. Stay exploitative.

Andy L.

*Actually, Michael and I just finished patching together a price guide on out of print videos (tentatively titled *The Trashfiend's Guide to Collectible Videocassette Tapes*) which we're currently shopping around to publishers, so this may be a reality sooner than you think. (But then again--knowing how our luck has been as of late--it may take longer to actually sell it than it did to compile it.) As for subscriptions, we'll see if there's even a next issue before taking it into consideration. The Editor*

Hey guys,

Just picked up GICK! #3. Another great issue. It's hard to believe it's almost entirely the work of one person (though no knock to those who did help out). I've been getting your mag through my local comic shop, through their Previews program, and I must say that even though I was recently forced to drop a few of the horror movie mags I used to buy, yours won't be one of them. Anyway, I've rambled enough. Can't wait half a year for the next ish, but looks like I must.

Sincerely,

Madison Carter

Geez... if you people keep pelting me with all the kind words, I may actually start believing them. (Worse, put me in a good mood and I may even lose my edge. If I weren't such a grump, I just wouldn't be me.) The Editor

The following letter should be self-explanatory to anyone who has been following GICK! for the last couple of years. (If not, see the references to Mystics in Bali in the "Errata" section of issue one, and Mr. Bertsch's letter that was published in issue three for some insight to the "Demon Kickboxing Pig Controversy".)

A Letter to the Editor:

Ah, how distinctly I recall,
T'was in the months that followed fall,
I had finished school and all,
Was well as I entered the comic store.
While ducking clerks I found quite boring,

I headed towards the section most abhorring,
 Filled by magazines with goring,
 I found something, something ne'er seen before.
 Reviewing flicks that make most snore,
 Pondering film days of yore,
 Oh, treasure trove of trashy lore,
 You shall be mine forevermore.
 As I read this painful excursion,
 I was told of a film diversion,
 From a land full of perversion,
 A movie with a special boar.
 Most all pigs have four feet,
 But this pig was a special treat,
 As it used its hooves to beat,
 Any opponent that came unto the fore!
 Oh, my dreams have been fulfilled,
 A demon pig! Kickboxing to kill,
 My chances of seeing it, though, were nil,
 As it hadn't been released upon my shore.
 I was about to cry, but I did hesitate,
 When I saw the rag was from my state,
 Words can't describe how I did elate,
 The writer lived virtually next door.
 Friendship gained and time doth pass,
 But still no demon pigs, alas,
 Until one faithful day, at last,
 An offer was put onto the floor.
 "Devon, I do proposition thee,
 With a film fest for you, Mike, and me,
 I've borrowed Mystics of Bali."
 Finally... the kickboxing boar!
 As the film's plot did unfold,
 The pig turned up to joy untold,
 But nary a kick... in the mud it just rolled,
 This is the nigh legendary pig of lore???
 "Scott, what the hell were you smoking?
 Or," I offered, "perhaps you were simply joking?
 At your audience simply fun poking.
 When you wrote of this boar?"
 "Devon," Scott did reply,
 "you know that it's hard to view,
 Anything in the films I zip through,
 I fast forward to the end and write a review,
 Each film faster than the one before."
 "But this film's a waste of time,
 To make us watch it was a crime,
 Such utter dreck isn't worth a dime,
 Turn it off, I must implore!"
 "Devon, you're the one that kept all awake,
 With repeated cries of "Crater Lake!"
 And that monster's so fucking fake!
 But if you want, I'll put on Sex Psycho once more."
 All at once Mike did yell,
 "Gee, Scott, gay porn, that'd be swell..."

You can just go straight to Hell!"
 "Gay porn?" Scott said.

"Strange, no one's complained of that before..."
 For, you see, that is Scott's trick,
 To dash our hopes or make us sick,
 And laugh at us as he types up GICK!,
 For we are his video whores.

To Devon ..

*Once upon a film so dreary
 A quaint young man, all sound and fury
 Made quite clear his ire over a mythical, mystical boar
 And with his words, I took a lashing
 Spittle flying, teeth a gnashing
 For I received a bashing as I have never felt before
 "Who is this man," I muttered,
 "braining me like none before?"
 'Twas Devon Bertsch, my video whore*

*And as time passed, I thought it over
 Having fled and ducked for cover
 I approached him still,
 not knowing what he had in store
 A "You've Got Mail" disturbed my napping,
 That online voice incessantly rapping,
 Drowned out by my fingers tapping,
 tapping as I doth swore
 "Tis not spam," I found, "knocking at my virtual door?"
 Naught but Devon, my video whore*

*But not a letter he bestows
 It is a verse not unlike Poe's
 An epic piece which did strike fear unto my very core
 "I'm sorry that your dreams were shattered,
 As if nothing else has mattered,
 My reputation's been bespattered,
 sullied not like this before
 "Please forgive me, I doth implore!"
 Quoth the Devon "Nevermore"*

*And so I jot upon this page
 These words, in hopes to quell the rage
 A rage that fuels the fires of this bloodied war
 "Enough with the incessant whining,
 Cease with the incensed maligning,
 Or you'll spend your whole life pining,
 pining for a rutting boar!"
 But all my pleas he doth ignore
 That damnable pig I shall live down...
 Nevermore!*

Scott's Filipino Video Vault
Continued from page 31

Wonder Women continued...

promise wealthy clients a stab at immortality. Gun for hire Mike Harber (Hagen) is brought on to crack the case.

This is a dated, often times confusing "action" film directed by O'Neil (who started out producing low-budget exploitation flicks like *The Psycho Lover* and wound up doing higher-budgeted exploitation flicks like *Angel*). Geek value is high with the film's science fiction formula, wacky "futuristic" lab sets, sedate action music, brain sex, the biggest 'fro ever sported by an actress, and a handful of scientific "mistakes" (The freaks include a one-eyed monster named "T-Rex", an ape girl, and a guy with a siren on his head.) The acting is predictably bad, and all of the actresses picked for the fight scenes

had—bless their hearts—never even seen a martial arts movie in their life, apparently picking up what little they knew from the Saturday morning cartoon Hong-Kong Phooey.

To add to the fun are numerous Filipino regulars, including Diaz as a taxi driver, Bruno Punzalan as a cockfighting bookie, and even Haig (with hair) as Dr. Tsu's lawyer Gregorias. (Definitely a stretch from his roles in both *Spider Baby* and *The Big Bird Cage*.)

Unfortunately, *Wonder Women* is lacking some of the staples of exploitation cinema; the violence is fairly subdued (no gory surgery footage to be had), and—although there's plenty of opportunities to show nudity—titillation is relegated to a couple of sheer bra shots with nary a pube in sight.

Embarrassing, but there's still some fun to be had here. * * *

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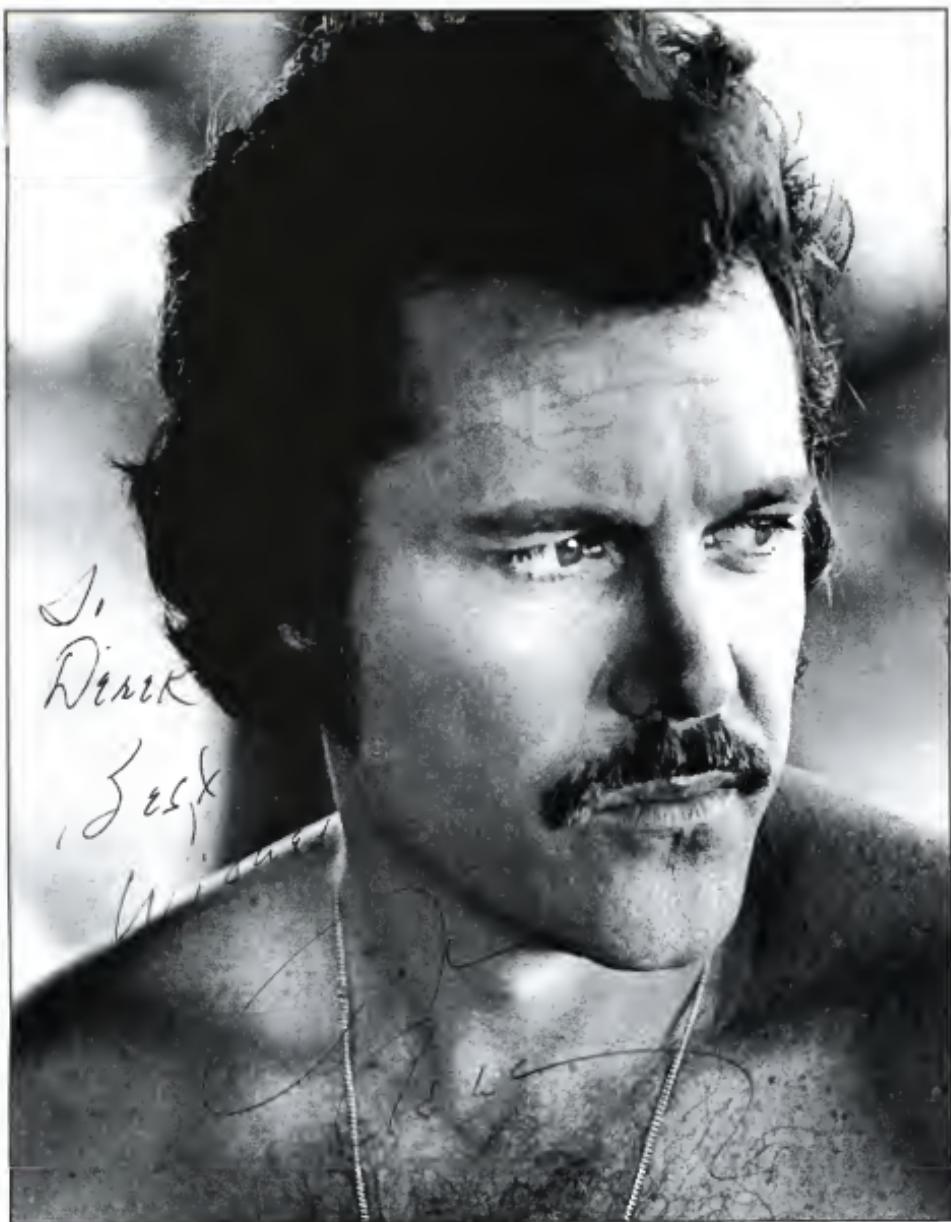
These are the fine people who make it possible for magazines like *GICK!* to flourish, let alone exist in the first place. If you're a small press publisher working on a budget, I strongly suggest that you check them out if you haven't already. Trust me on this.

NEXT ISSUE

Available April 1st, 2001

Well, the first of April is a tentative release date, anyway. We may be taking a short hiatus in order to accommodate some other projects that are finally seeing the light of day. (Being a one-man operation who makes his living from eBay, I only have the time and money to finance one project at a time; if it's too excruciating a wait, throw some of your big bucks my way and I'll see if I can't rush things along. Just for you.) As to what will actually be in the next issue of *GICK!*, I have no clue as I simply haven't planned that far in advance. One can pretty much assume, though, that it will be the same sort of cinematic detritus we covered *this* issue, except that there will probably be fewer Filipino films. (I just received a copy of Gerardo de Leon's *Women's Penitentiary II*, and—not being able to squeeze it in this issue—will probably review it in number five just so all of you *Blood Island* freaks don't have to go cold turkey.) *Addio, ciao, ciao...*





Now if only some hare-brained nitwit hadn't scribbled all over this 8x10 photo, it would've been worth something... The Editor.

IN THIS ISSUE:

THE HORRORS OF BLOOD ISLAND

Horror & Exploitation Cinema from the Philippines

EDDIE ROMERO

MAD DIRECTOR OF BLOOD ISLAND

With an Exhaustive Filmography

JOHN ASHLEY

FROM TEENAGE JUVES TO MONSTER MOVIES

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THE BLOOD-SOAKED HISTORY

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STIGMATA
PRESS



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